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Inquiry on

SEXUAL VIOLENCE IN CONFLICT

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Questions 1 - 9

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3.45 pm

Witnesses: Lord Hague of Richmond, Baroness Helic and Ms Angelina Jolie Pitt

USE OF THE TRANSCRIPT

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Members present

Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne (Chairman)
 Lord Hannay of Chiswick
 Baroness Hodgson of Abinger
 Baroness Hussein-Ece
 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead
 Lord Sterling of Plaistow
 Baroness Warsi
 Baroness Young of Hornsey

Examination of Witnesses

Lord Hague of Richmond, former Foreign Secretary and co-founder of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, **Baroness Helic**, former Special Adviser to William Hague, and **Ms Angelina Jolie Pitt**, Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and co-founder of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative

Q1 The Chairman: Good afternoon, and thank you very much for being with us. I will address the public first, please. I remind you that photography is forbidden. Secondly, we would be grateful if you would be kind enough to remain seated at the end of the session until our witnesses have departed.

A very warm welcome to our panel of witnesses. Thank you very much indeed for agreeing to come to us today. Could we as a Committee thank Mrs Jolie Pitt for giving the Committee eight DVD copies of the film, “In the Land of Blood and Honey”? Thank you very much indeed.

This is a formal evidence session. You have a list of interests that have been declared by Committee Members. This is a formal evidence-taking session of the Committee, and a full shorthand note will be taken. This will be put on the public record in printed form and on the parliamentary website. The session is on the record. It is being ‘webcast’ live and will be subsequently accessible via the parliamentary website. Apart from that, please provide any supplementary written material if you feel that something has not been covered. We would welcome that. As a final point, it would be really helpful if everyone could speak clearly so the whole room can hear. Thank you very much.

Before we move in on the questions, I wondered whether you would like to give us your free-ranging thoughts as to what you would like us to think about this afternoon. Are there any comments that you would like to open the discussion with?

Lord Hague of Richmond: Lord Chairman, first, I strongly welcome the establishment of this Committee and its work. Part of our objective in the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative has been to ensure that this subject is debated and discussed all over the world, in parliaments and governments all over the world. I hope that many other parliaments will do so following the example of this House. We will certainly continue to support that in many different parts of the world.

I will make just three very short points in opening. One is that this subject is one on which it is possible to succeed. There is often complacency or cynicism, but it is possible to combat sexual violence in conflict. The second is that it is a crucial part of foreign policy; it is not an add-on, it is not something to be dealt with when we are not too busy doing something else. If your questions will allow me, later in the session I want to argue that it is a fundamental part of a successful foreign policy to tackle this issue. The third is that it is a subject that must be addressed by men as well as women. I have often been asked why a man is pursuing this subject—a breath-taking question when you think about it, but you do get asked that. These are crimes that are committed almost exclusively by men, and that they happen and have happened for many years and go unchallenged should shame all men. Men and male leaders in the world have a crucial role to play in tackling this issue. Those are the three points that I hope to explain in more detail during our session.

The Chairman: Thank you very much indeed. I hope it is not out of place to welcome you very warmly as a Member of the House of Lords.

Lord Hague of Richmond: I am not here yet as a Member of the House of Lords. When I am I will pursue this issue in the House of Lords, along with many of you.

The Chairman: We have you in this nice middle moment.

Lord Hague of Richmond: Exactly.

Angelina Jolie Pitt: Thank you, Lord Chairman, Lords and Ladies. I am very grateful to be here today and to have the opportunity to speak with you and to express my gratitude to the UK for its leadership on this issue.

For over 10 years, I have been visiting the field and meeting families and survivors of sexual violence who have felt for so long that their voices simply did not matter. They were not heard and they carried a great shame. I remember distinctly meeting this little girl who was very young, probably about seven or eight. She was rocking backwards and forwards and staring at the wall. She had tears streaming down her face because she had been brutally raped multiple times. You could not talk to her, you could not touch her. I felt absolutely helpless and did not know what to do for her.

More recently I met a 13 year-old girl in Iraq who had been kept in a room with many other girls. They were taken out in twos, brought to this very dirty room with this dirty couch and raped repeatedly. But she told me that what was even worse than the physical violence was that they then had to stand in rooms, watch their friends be sold and hear men arguing about what they were worth. Were they worth \$40, \$50? What was their price? What was their value? She told me how humiliating and demoralising that was, and it made her question what she was worth. Knowing that, knowing that people around the world know of her situation, wondering why not enough was being done to stop it, and knowing them, meant that it meant a great deal to be with the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom in Congo and to hear him speak to girls and express his opinion that they should have no shame, that it was not their fault, that the shame should be on the perpetrators and that he would do what he could. I saw what that meant.

I then had the privilege of being at the G8 to witness Foreign Ministers of powerful countries around the world speaking about these issues and trying to figure out what best needs to be done, and to see civil society, NGOs and governments coming together to talk about what could be done. Now today I can say what it means to be here with you in this Committee in

your Parliament, knowing that you are studying the best ways to help these women. I think that speaks to these young girls about their value. That is the answer: we do value them and we are going to work together. I am very happy to be here and to be a part of this with you today. I thank you very much and I look forward to your questions.

Baroness Helic: There will be very short remarks from me. I am absolutely privileged to be here to give evidence to this Committee and in particular to be with two people whose leadership and compassion have given hope to so many survivors of conflict-related rape and the people who work with them. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my former colleagues at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office who have continued to work tirelessly on this issue under the excellent leadership of the Prime Minister's Special Representative Baroness Anelay. I look forward to answering your questions and eventually to your insights into what we should be doing collectively to try to find answers to why these crimes happen, why they take place and what we can and must do to help eventually eradicate them.

Q2 The Chairman: Turning to a slightly more formal question, I declare my interests that are relevant to this Committee. I chair the AMAR International Charitable Foundation, I have a badged member of staff, Mr Richard Crow, who is the Chief Executive of the AMAR foundation, and I am also the UK delegate in the International Parliamentary Network, 'Women Free from Violence'.

You may feel you have answered my first question, but you might elaborate a little more on the genesis of the Preventing Sexual Violence Initiative, because that will lead us into how you foresee the next steps and how we can ensure that this is bedded down and firm and secure for the future. Do you have a comment on that?

Lord Hague of Richmond: Yes, Lord Chairman, it allows me to expand on what each of us said before. For all of us who have been involved in this, the genesis is in our personal experiences. In my case, the first time I visited IDP camps in Darfur was when I heard about the experiences of the women in those camps, who were always expected to collect the firewood and were always at risk of rape whenever they left the camp. Then I visited Bosnia a number of times and heard about the people who had been systematically raped in the wars of the 1990s without any justice being done—without these crimes and without the perpetrators ever being brought to justice. I formed the view that tackling this is part of foreign policy, because if it is true that these crimes are committed to make peace more difficult to achieve, and it is true in most cases, and if it is true that these crimes are designed to make reconciliation between communities more difficult, and it often is true, and if it is true that these crimes are designed to create greater flows of refugees out of conflict areas, which is also generally true, then tackling sexual violence in conflict is an essential part of a foreign policy that seeks peace and security in the world. That is why I say it is not an add-on subject. That is the genesis of why I, as Foreign Secretary, made it part of the work of the Foreign Office, which I am very pleased to see is now continuing.

When Angelina made her film, "In the Land of Blood and Honey", my special advisers at the time, including now Baroness Helic, persuaded me to watch it and then to show it in the Foreign Office, and that was what brought us together in what we came to call PSVI. That brought together two elements that had been missing so far. This is a subject on which NGOs have done fantastic work—the real heroes of this subject are the people working in hospitals in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the people who supported survivors in

Bosnia for years—but what was missing was a major country in the world using its seat at the United Nations and its diplomatic reach to raise this subject around the world.

The other thing that was missing was a global reach, which Angelina Jolie Pitt has brought, helping people all over the world see what an important subject this is. So by working together on this we have brought two missing ingredients to the work to prevent sexual violence.

Baroness Helic: Having been born and brought up in Bosnia-Herzegovina and having somehow, in a certain way, seen the impact this crime has on individuals, their families and a particular ethnic group, from the moment I came to work in the Foreign Office I always hoped that I would somehow be able to explain what happens when war happens in a country. I saw the film almost as a documentary, because I saw two hours of an incredibly powerful and historically and contextually precise account of what was going on in Bosnia between 1992 and 1995. I realised that I found myself in the very powerful position of being an adviser in the Foreign Office and I thought that if there is one country that can take a lead on this, if there is one moment when we can use this, that was the moment. I had the privilege and the luck of working for William, who had it in him to understand that this is not a left-over of conflict and it is not incidental. There are wars around the world, as we witness today, where women become battlefields, where ethnic cleansing and genocide are a part of daily routine, and so is sexual violence.

Angelina Jolie Pitt: I spent so much time simply meeting victims and wanted to be able to communicate what I felt sitting in the room with them and hearing them, as I know many of you have done. Having been affected by them, you want to bring their voices forward. I wanted to do so and did my best, but felt very limited as an artist. We can express certain things and we can get people around the world feeling what is right, and outraged and condemning. There has been a change in my view of the world. Working closely with the Government of the United Kingdom, I understand that all that good will is wonderful but laws need to change and policy needs to change. Governments and leaderships need to come together, and that will make the real change for all the wonderful people who I have met and worked with in the field. They are heroes of mine, and I absolutely love them, but they can do only so much. What they do is extraordinary, but what governments and leaders can do and what real policy change and these declarations and protocols can do from the top down are the only things that are finally going to make the difference.

Q3 Baroness Hodgson of Abinger: I declare my interests relevant to this Committee. I am a member of the steering board of the PSVI and am chair of the advisory board of GAPS, Gender Action for Peace and Security. I am the co-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Women, Peace and Security, and I am a member of the Oxfam association.

What do you perceive to be the root causes of sexual violence in conflict, and to what extent you think there are commonalities or significant differences between conflicts?

Angelina Jolie Pitt: The most important thing is to understand what it is not, and it is not sexual. It is a violent, brutal, terrorising weapon. Unfortunately, it is everywhere, in and out of conflict, in every country basically. I cannot think of one where there is not this issue. The most aggressive terrorist group in the world today knows what we know, that it is a very effective weapon, and it is using it as a centre point of its terror and its way of attacking, destroying and dehumanising communities and families. As to the differences, I see far too

many things in common, unfortunately. It is too simple. It seems so base and common. It is everywhere, and it has been going on for so long. Impunity is also very common. It is everywhere. Everywhere you go you meet women and men, girls and boys who talk about how they feel, what it has done to their lives, what it has done to their communities and that there is impunity. This is also common.

Baroness Helic: Naively, I believed that Bosnia was the only country that suffered from this ill. Having travelled extensively in different countries, I realise that this kind of crime does not belong to Africa or Bosnia but is a crime that routinely happens in conflict. There are various schools of thought; there are those who say that it is incidental, but there are very persuasive reasons to believe that it often becomes organised crime. It is used as a weapon of war because it causes fear and terror. From my experience, the most effective method of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the use of rape as a weapon of war in eastern Bosnia, where swathes of that part of the country were cleansed purely because there were reports—not rumours, sadly, but reports that proved to be genuine—of women being kept in rape camps, and the same thing happening to men, regardless of their age, and that caused enormous terror. Villages and towns where this information arrived would almost self-cleanse and the people would disappear.

Lord Hague of Richmond: The others have put it very well.

Q4 Baroness Hussein-Ece: You have all eloquently set out how PSVI has been established to prevent the use of rape and other forms of sexual violence as a weapon of war. Specifically, in what areas do you think PSVI has made the most and the least progress towards achieving this goal?

Lord Hague of Richmond: We have now made quite a lot of progress in creating the essential tools to address this issue. The International Protocol that we launched at the Global Summit is a document of immense value. It is the guidance to assist people all over the world in the investigation and documentation of these crimes. This is very important, because usually one of the most significant reasons why the crimes are not prosecuted is that evidence is difficult to obtain or preserve. That is now in place, and much of the continuing work of the Foreign Office on this is dedicated to rolling out that Protocol, translating it and training people in its use. So that tool is there. The UN Declaration of Commitment has been signed by 155 countries, more than three-quarters of the UN, so their commitment to take action is there. Many other things have started to move.

It would be quite a long list, and perhaps we should write to the Committee with our summary of what we think PSVI has achieved so far. It includes military training around the world so far, including the training of 8,000 African peacekeeping personnel and thousands of members of the new army in Mali. It includes the training of the Kurdish Pashmerga in Iraq. There have been 60 deployments of the UK Team of Experts, supported by the Foreign Office, to 13 countries to give training on the investigation and prosecution of crimes. There are 40 practical projects around the world supporting human rights defenders and NGOs in their work on this subject. We have begun to see change in the actions of some of the governments of the world. The government of the DRC have launched an action plan for the Congolese army on sexual violence, and have appointed a Special Representative of the President on Child Recruitment and Sexual Violence. The government of Cote d'Ivoire has begun legal reform. The governments of Croatia and Kosovo have revised their laws to allow victims of sexual violence to access compensation and state support. The court of Bosnia has

awarded compensation, setting an important precedent. The EU has decided to build the prevention of sexual violence into common security and defence policy missions. NATO has detailed guidelines now on the prevention of sexual violence in conflict to be incorporated into training. Many of these things have happened because of our initiative so far, linked in with the work of hundreds of other people across the world.

So I feel that we have begun, but since our objective is to change the entire global attitude to these crimes, it is only a beginning. Some people say, “Well, it hasn’t worked”. How does one begin to answer that? Of course it is not going to work in all its objectives in two or three years, nor would any of the great campaigns of history have worked if people had decided after two or three years that they had not. However, we have made a great deal of progress in the ways that I have described. The missing part now is getting more of the governments of the world to implement the Protocol and use those tools that we have created—the policy statements, the Protocol—and to set about the right training of military, judges and prosecutors. The framework is all there. Now we need several governments and countries to do sufficiently well at this that they become inspiring examples to other countries. I am sorry that that is a bit of a long answer but we could, and perhaps we should, give the Committee a lot more detail in writing.

Lord Hannay of Chiswick: Could you give us any idea of which countries have not signed up—those remaining between 155 and 193—and whether any of them gave a reason for not signing up, or have they just been too ashamed to do so?

Lord Hague of Richmond: There is a mixture of reasons among that minority, which includes governments who do not sign very many international resolutions: North Korea and Iran have not signed, for example. It is disappointing that Russia has not signed, despite having supported the G8 Declaration. Some countries are reluctant to sign for their own legal reasons, and are concerned that they might be subjecting themselves to some new body of supranational law or investigation. On the whole, many countries that are not supportive of the International Criminal Court end up not signing, although many have signed even though they are not members of the ICC. So there is a mixture of reasons. There can be a suspicion of the motives of westerners putting forward these ideas, or concerns about national sovereignty. Nevertheless, the great majority of nations in the world have signed, and wanted to sign.

Baroness Hussein-Ece: I have a supplementary question. I think William Hague has already answered part of it, but I want to ask you whether in your view there are areas where progress has been a bit limited and what more could be done to persuade or even encourage better progress. We want to present some solid recommendations as to how we can roll this out.

Lord Hague of Richmond: If I could I will mention two and let my colleagues in on this as well. One is to mobilise transnational organisations, such as the African Union. Since the general election, since I left office, we have continued this work informally. Angelina and I addressed the African Union Foreign Ministers’ Summit in South Africa in June, again something that would not have happened before we launched this initiative, at the invitation of the chairperson of the African Union Commission, Madame Dlamini-Zuma, who attended the Global Summit. More can be done, as we did at that meeting, to mobilise some of the great regional institutions and organisations of the world to lead their members on this subject. It is vital as well for our own Government and strongly supportive governments

such as Germany and the United States to raise this constantly at the bilateral level, which was the habit that I got into as Foreign Secretary—to the shock, to begin with, of other Foreign Ministers in the world that at every meeting all over the world I was raising this subject. They all started to have briefings about it. That has to be sustained.

Sorry, I am talking too much.

The Chairman: No, I just wondered whether Baroness Helic or Ms Jolie Pitt wanted to comment on that supplementary question or the main question.

Angelina Jolie Pitt: On the question of what more can be done, I will simply and briefly, if I may, first speak about what I feel has been done. In very human terms, we have seen that many of the victims have now come out of the shadows. That cannot be quantified, but people around the world who have gone through these things now feel that they can speak out, that this is being discussed, that if they speak it is worthy of their time, efforts, pain and tears. They will be heard and they can feel that things are moving and that there is some momentum. Each individual feels less stigmatised. Many have come forward as a result, and to me that is everything. In Bosnia, the case that William spoke about was particularly moving for all of us. This is a man who we met in Medica Zenica, an organisation in Bosnia that helps survivors. He had been raped 20 years ago, and he spoke about his situation, which was obviously very sensitive and very difficult. Just this year in August, he was the first man to be recognised as having civil war victim status. What that means for other male victims is that other men will then speak out and young boys will be less ashamed. This is what is happening at a very human level and it is very, very important.

What more can be done? There is so much more, so we also look forward to your ideas—to any ideas. Whoever we speak to we ask how they feel. Awareness is important, and that is certainly something that I can do my best to achieve. William and I speak out wherever we can whenever we have a chance to make sure that citizens of the countries that have not signed know why they have not signed, can understand more about this and hopefully can encourage their countries to support and sign. It is a good sign to me in a way. I am a citizen so I do not know much about some of these things sometimes, it is a bit over my head, but I do know that it seems almost as though when things are signed too easily there is not enough in them. When it comes to what has been asked, people have to sign up for something that they are going to be held against, that is very detailed and well thought out and that they cannot just sign, it looks good and they can walk away and not have to make an active difference. That is good, and I think they will eventually sign, but we are asking them to make big changes and think very differently and not just speak but do.

The political will to mount and see through successful prosecutions is what will make the biggest difference: when there is finally case after case, from the UN blue helmets to the military to men in the ICC, as rapists around the world start to be held accountable for their crimes. The more the world knows about this the more we make a point of doing that. That is going to be the difference.

Baroness Helic: I will be very brief. One moment that summarises for me what had been achieved was when I visited Iraq with William when he was Foreign Secretary. Before we had a chance to raise this issue with our counterpart, he raised it with us. That was quite a moment, and I realised that what used to be an uncomfortable conversation between two Foreign Ministers suddenly became almost something that needed to be addressed. For me

that was when I thought that we might have broken this taboo and now had a good starting point on which to build.

Q5 Baroness Warsi: Thank you very much for attending this session. My questions follow on from what has been discussed: this culture of impunity, which was a key priority of the PSVI scheme. I have a number of questions, so I hope you will bear with me. The first is to understand the rationale behind making that a key priority. I agree with it, but it would be good for the Committee to hear that. Secondly, the international protocol, which a number of countries have signed, is seen at the moment as a best-practice guidance document. Do you see it as more than that, and do you see it developing into more than that? How much success has there been in prosecutions? Are we seeing more crimes of sexual violence in indictments, both in international courts and in national courts? If not, what more could be done? Finally, in tackling the culture of impunity, is prosecution the only way, or is there also scope for more informal truth and reconciliation-type work? Have you seen examples of that, or do you feel that our focus should still be on prosecutions?

Baroness Helic: On impunity, there are different ways, and many NGOs and civil society groups have been dealing with this for the last 10 to 20 years, some more successfully than others. When we discussed initially how to take this forward, we focused very narrowly on impunity, because in my mind it is very simple, it is common sense—if you have broken the law and committed a crime, you must take responsibility for that. We can see in so many theatres of war, whether in Iraq at the moment, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in Kosovo or elsewhere, that people who commit these crimes do not find themselves in front of judges or military commanders. Actually, they get promoted. If you commit this crime, to start with your moral values are of dubious quality, but if you get no punishment and if there is no responsibility to be taken, you might even consider that this is something to be rewarded. Although tackling impunity is not the only way forward—there are ways in which you can go for training if you are in the military, or for education if you are a civilian—if I had to put a finger on the most important pillar of this I would say that it is impunity, because you have to know that if you commit a crime there are consequences and you have to face up to them.

Lord Hague of Richmond: I agree. I do not think that we can change an entire global attitude if people are not punished when they go totally against that attitude. It is a crucial part of changing the approach in many different parts of the world. Although it is very important to support survivors, and that has been part of our work, and it is very important to try to prevent these crimes, which is part of good development aid, it is crucial to attack impunity. That is bringing an axe to the very root of the problem, which is that people think they can commit these crimes and get away with it. We have to do that.

One of Baroness Warsi's other questions was about the International Protocol. It is guidance and best practice. It is not designed to turn into a new body of law. In the vast majority of countries, we do not need new laws. It is already against the law virtually everywhere in the world to commit these crimes. What is needed is knowledge, techniques and expertise that help people to enforce the law. That is what the Protocol is designed to be.

On prosecutions, the ICC has before it the prosecution of Jean-Pierre Bemba. We are awaiting the judgment on that. There is the prosecution of Bosco Ntaganda, who is charged with rape and sexual slavery. It is the first time, I think, in international law that a

commander has been charged with crimes of sexual violence committed against children in his own militia group. That prosecution started last week. There is the forthcoming trial of Laurent Gbagbo, the former president of Côte d'Ivoire, which will also raise some of these issues. The work of the ICC on this is to be encouraged, as is prosecution throughout the world. Those prosecutions go up and down from year to year, but I hope that as the Protocol is used more widely, they will go more steadily upwards. For instance, part of our work has been to meet prosecutors and judges in Bosnia to encourage them to see that successful prosecutions can be obtained.

On the other questions, there could be a role for truth and reconciliation commissions, but impunity is still of central importance. I would reiterate that.

Angelina Jolie Pitt: I would say that despite immense efforts, there has yet to be a single conviction for sexual violence in the ICC. Also, many cases are lost before they are brought to trial. I was there for the Bemba trial. There was clear evidence on this and clear evidence on that, but with sexual violence the evidence is harder, so somehow it ends up being lost. Sometimes it does not even make it to trial, even though in that case there were women victims who were coming to speak. It is important to have a precedent set and that these cases go forward. It is clear that a big part of this is the collection of this evidence. That is why we focus on it. The teams that go in are speaking on how better to collect evidence. These women need to know. For example, when a woman is raped she needs to feel that there are people there to help her and that it is worth speaking out, that she is going to be listened to. If she goes to a clinic and there is evidence that she has been raped, it needs to be documented. What has happened to her has to be documented, and that information has to be kept in the clinics and the local courts with the local lawyers and eventually brought to trial, locally or in the International Criminal Court. In order to do that, these women have to believe that it is going to make difference, because it is very hard for them. Why does impunity matter? I think of my family, and I know what would happen to my family if I or my daughters were raped. I imagine everybody in this room can think, just for a moment, of what it would do to their family structure and their lives if their daughters, their sons, their wife or their husband were raped. You would want support, but you would also want the world to know that it was wrong and that the person who did it should not just walk free and get away with it. In whatever way that needs to be done, that is part of your healing so that you can move forward in your life. It is what victims deserve. If that family or community decided that a truth and reconciliation commission was something they wanted, were open to and felt was a step forward—we have seen that that is possible in other ways—why not? It is something on which we listen to people and communities and they will guide us about when it is time for that.

Q6 Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead: Thank you for your presentations today. We really appreciate the time that you are giving us. Hearing what you are saying, I remember very well being in Congo during the war and meeting in Panzi hospital three women who had been raped. They had told their children to run away when the men came, and I learnt after I had met them and talked to them that they never saw their children again. You never forget those stories. They affect you for the rest of your life, as is clear from what you said.

No one has mentioned the Summit, and perhaps we should have done. You certainly raised awareness, which was very welcome. What is the long-term strategy now? We have had the Summit and have agreed with each other, but I do not think that we are properly

challenging the continuing challenges. We have quite a distance still to go. Many of us think that that strategy must be embedded in the work of the United Kingdom Government, and as far as I know it is not now. In its current reviews, DfID should be looking at its bilateral and multilateral funding and making that a priority. Those are the things that we need to take from here in order to make some difference for the women and families who you have described so movingly.

Baroness Helic: PSVI is not and should never be an initiative that is connected to one Parliament, one parliamentary Session, one particular party or one particular Government. It ought to be embedded into the workings of the United Kingdom Government because we have achieved enough for it to present a very good base on which to build. I declare my interest as a Conservative Peer, and I am very proud to say that the Conservative Party manifesto had a commitment to PSVI which the Conservative Government are now taking forward. I was delighted to see that the Prime Minister appointed our colleague Baroness Anelay as the new Prime Minister's Special Representative. I also welcome the appointment of the MoD champion, General Messenger. The support the Government have also given to setting up the LSE Centre for Women, Peace and Security speaks for itself. But however strong our political will is, we cannot take it forward on our own. We always have to know that this belongs to every single party. This is not a political issue. This is not something over which we can agree or disagree. This is wrong whether you are yellow, blue or red within our House, and I hope that we can embed it so deeply and strongly within Whitehall that when in future we look back we will say, "We started in a very modest way and look where we are now". That is my desire and ambition, and I hope that in your recommendations you will forcefully call for such an effort.

Baroness Kinnock of Holyhead: Just very quickly on the question of what DfID should be doing through its current review of bilateral and multilateral funding to achieve all the things you have been talking about, there has to be reliable funding.

Baroness Helic: Absolutely. It is a wonderful idea. If I were the Secretary of State for DfID, which I am not, my funding would always hinge on whether that country had a commitment and whether that commitment was respected, and I would want to see that respect shown in concrete terms, not just in signing a declaration, showing up at a meeting or being nice and collegiate to international colleagues, but in genuinely taking it forward.

Q7 Baroness Young of Hornsey: I thank the panel for their contributions this afternoon. I should declare an interest as patron of Anti-Slavery International, one of the oldest human rights organisations in the world. In some of the comments you were making earlier, Mr Hague, you referred, perhaps subtly, to the movement to abolish the slave trade, which took a couple of centuries. We sincerely hope that we can do things a little faster, given what we have at our disposal today.

You have answered this question in bits and pieces, but I would like to get a sense of other things that you could say to us. We know that international governments are obliged under international law to prevent sexual violence in armed conflict, but how can the international community support further the efforts of those who really are making that effort to do something different and make the change and to encourage those who are not? What specific tactics and levers can you bring to bear on members of the international community, particularly those countries whose own armies are engaged in this activity? Recently I read, "These are a group of war heroes, so we don't want to bring in this issue about them having

perpetrated sexual violence". What can the UK Government and other governments do to address that situation?

Lord Hague of Richmond: In the interests of time, I will be very quick. I think this includes the continued focus of the British Government and hopefully other governments. My successor Philip Hammond has recently written a joint article with Secretary Kerry on this, so I hope the United States government are constantly raising these matters around the world. There is the mobilisation of regional organisations, such as the African Union, and there is a major role for churches, particularly the Catholic Church, which has such reach in many parts of the world, including parts of the world severely affected by sexual violence in conflict. There is a major role for NGOs and civil society to use their connections in and within other countries to put pressure on governments who have not implemented their commitments and persuade them to sign up to new commitments. Many of them have great international reach and can use new technology to contact people all over the world. Increasingly we have to uphold and publicise the role models of success. There are people who achieve amazing things. Baroness Kinnock mentioned Panzi hospital in DRC, and the work there of Dr Mukwege is remarkable. The work of Medica Zenica in Bosnia is remarkable. These are people who should be known about all over the world because they can inspire others. There may be more that we can all do together to ensure that.

Q8 Baroness Hodgson of Abinger: I endorse what was said about the work of Medica Zenica. Having gone to Bosnia last year and met the male survivor, I was blown away by his bravery in coming forward. He was one of the most outstanding people I have met. How do you think the UK Government and the international community should respond when rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage are used as instruments of terror by State and non-State actors, such as ISIL? How do you think PSVI fits with asylum and immigration policy? How should we determine who is a victim of sexual violence in these conflicts when they come to this country?

Angelina Jolie Pitt: I know from working with UNHCR on issues of migration that there are very intensive interviews, and sometimes clinics try medically to understand and assess this. When anybody applies for asylum, they sit and confess what they feel and what has happened to them. That has to be vetted, and it is vetted as carefully as it can be. That must be done. Of course, we are going to be seeing a lot of that right now. I was in Malta when a boat had sunk and a few survivors were being pulled out. One man who we met had lost his wife and two children. They were living in the war in Syria and they were dealing with the violence. He was doing his best to stay as a doctor. They ended up going to Libya to try to find a better life. They found when they were there that the biggest threat was that the children and his wife would be sexually assaulted. That is what made the final decision for them to get on that boat, and they lost their lives. We know that the terrorist group that we are dealing with in Syria and Iraq is absolutely using rape. It is dictating it as policy. This is beyond anything that we have seen before. This is organised and put into its policy. It is saying that this should be done and that this is the right way to build a society. It is saying, "We are going to do this and cleanse and use this, so we ask you to rape". We have to have a very strong response at this time to this particular group on this issue.

Lord Hague of Richmond: On ISIL, this is a key part of a strategy for preventing sexual violence going forward. We should make it a very important strand of our work to counter ISIL. Rape and sexual violence is its actual policy, as Angelina said. Opposing that should be

part of the counternarrative to what it is doing. Helping survivors who have suffered from its brutality should be a key part of the global coalition against ISIL so that it is not seen just as a military effort but is part of the humanitarian assistance. I hope that the UK, the United States and other leading countries in the global coalition will give increased importance to combatting sexual violence and to highlighting the crimes that are being committed in Iraq and Syria.

Baroness Helic: On asylum and immigration policy, when we were in government we had a very strong and constructive relationship with the Home Office and the Home Secretary. We started a programme of receiving the victims of torture, which has made some progress. I hope that we can build on that, in particular with the announcement by the Prime Minister yesterday, which I welcome. I hope that in as far as one can give priority here, victims of this particular torture and crime are going to be given more support. We, as a country that has led on this, may have a particular responsibility to lead on bringing them to safety and providing them with the support they need.

Q9 Lord Hannay of Chiswick: I declare my interest as the joint chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on the United Nations and the All-Party Group on Global Security and Non-Proliferation. I should perhaps also mention that I was the British Ambassador to the UN when the events in Bosnia first came to light and when in particular it became clear from the Warburton report on the events in Bosnia that sexual violence was being used as a tool of policy designed to increase ethnic cleansing and the domination of the Bosnian Serbs in one part of the country.

I shall put a couple of questions about Britain's role as a permanent member of the UN Security Council and the way it could help to advance this agenda in that role, particularly about what you would like to see from the Security Council's current High-Level Review of Resolution 1325, which was the one about sexual violence and women in conflict. How can the UK best use its influence there? Will you also address the serious problem of peacekeepers, including UN peacekeepers? A very bad case has come to light in the past month in the Central African Republic, but it is not an isolated case. How should we be addressing this issue more effectively? Up to now it has not been addressed effectively. The troop contributors simply do not take it seriously. They do not prosecute their own troops. Should we be trying, for example, to get the Secretary-General to make it an absolute condition that any troop contributor should be giving training on this issue to its troops, and that if it does not, it does not become a troop contributor? Is there a case—I have been pressing this for years—for some kind of international tribunal to deal with accusations? You cannot hand these troops over to the country they are in, because there is probably no system of law there at all. Equally, if you leave it to the troop contributors, they probably do nothing about it.

The Chairman: Lord Sterling, will you put your question now?

Lord Sterling of Plaistow: My question is different. It is really a supplementary coming back to the law. Over 5,000 or 10,000 years, humanity has not found an answer to the problem we are trying to solve. Mr Hague made the point that this is the beginning of trying to persuade 7.5 billion people about how they should behave. I believe that what has changed dramatically is the rule of law and justice being seen. You commented that this is a crime in most countries. The international court in The Hague is hugely respected worldwide, but the problem is that Russia, America, China—the big ones—are not part of it. I have spoken to

friends in all those countries who tell me that they are not likely to become part of it. Ultimately, modern communications are such that whoever misbehaves in any part of the world cannot possibly say that they had no idea that they were going to be hounded for all time, brought to justice and, if you want, hanged to high heaven. They can have no misunderstanding about what is going to happen, but the speed of what happens at The Hague is so slow that people lose interest in what can happen. With everything we have been discussing about what we are trying to do—and this House, by the way, is totally non-partisan on issues of this type—the rule of law has the biggest effect in the short term.

Lord Hague of Richmond: We will each answer very quickly. Lord Hannay and Lord Sterling make very good points. We can further develop what we do at the UN Security Council. We took the initiative in recent years. In fact, when we had the presidency of the Security Council in June 2013, I hosted a debate and we passed a Security Council Resolution on these issues. I hope that the UK and other countries will continue to lead at the Security Council on this.

Peacekeeping missions are fundamental to this, as Lord Hannay said. This Committee will be able to decide what to recommend, but I think that the kind of provision on troop contributing countries which Lord Hannay mentioned may be an extremely good idea. It is important for the Security Council to have regular debates on these subjects so that in that central forum of the world sexual violence is regularly discussed and debated and there is greater bureaucratic and financial support for the work of the Secretary-General's Special Representative—Zainab Bangura at the moment—on sexual violence. The UK makes donations to her office to enable it to work well, but greater support could be marshalled for that. Many things can be done at the UN.

Lord Sterling is right about the central importance of the rule of law, which links to our point about impunity. Unfortunately, legal processes take a long time in many countries, but if the Protocol that we have devised is widely disseminated, translated and employed by prosecutors, there can be a great many more prosecutions and we will start to tackle impunity.

Angelina Jolie Pitt: I do not have an answer so much as that I just absolutely support what both Lord Hannay and Lord Sterling have said. This is exactly what needs to be done with the kind of force and determination that they expressed. We are speaking about cases as fresh as a month ago, as Baroness Young said. This cannot be, so we have to find a way to come together and use all these tools that we are putting together. We will not rest. The military and peacekeepers certainly have to lead by example. Their job is to protect. Any time they break this code and abuse the people they are supposed to protect, there does not just have to be justice, they have to be made an example of. I would like to learn more about the suggestion about how they are got together, where they are tried and what kind of court it is. I would like to know more about what could be done, what that would look like and how to make it possible.

The ICC is slow. It is relatively young. It has far to go. It is even harder in that there are countries that do not support it and can undermine it, but the countries that support it have to stay strong, as you have been, and help to pull the others over. Hopefully, the evidence being collected is one step so that next time there is a case—there are cases pending at this moment and hopefully they will be the first to set precedents—it will help to turn the tide in some of these final decisions and we will see justice begin.

Baroness Helic: I have a very short point to make. I agree with Lord Hannay that peacekeepers are meant to protect the most vulnerable and that it is not a good example when we see reports from the Central African Republic and elsewhere that the very people who are supposed to protect the most vulnerable are the ones committing the crime. The onus is on the UN Secretary-General, and I know he has done some work on this, to have zero tolerance applied to this kind of behaviour. Going back to Lady Warsi's point about where the Protocol could be taken next, this is one of those situations where not only should the Protocol be used when the crime has taken place but lessons from the Protocol should be taken and applied before the crime has taken place. I see no reason why, if countries see that there is some value in it, they should not use it in training their own soldiers, the peacekeepers. I would be delighted to see that their own manuals had sections informing their military men and women how to conduct themselves and how to respond to the crimes that take place. The UK Government have influence in the UN Security Council and could take this forward.

We launched the commitment at the UN General Assembly, and I would like to see an index of where countries that have committed to it are now, three years later. The UN General Assembly is next week, and I would like to see an index launched at it that would go through every single country that has made the commitment and say, "Since then, this is what you have done, and this is what you have not done". I would name and shame those who do not fulfil their commitment.

The Chairman: Wonderful. Thank you all very much indeed. Baroness Kinnock and I had two more questions to put so, with your permission, we will put them in writing. We would very much welcome any more evidence that you have to give us. You are the progenitors of this, and we are enormously grateful for all the highly valuable knowledge and information that you have given us this afternoon. Thank you all. Apologies for keeping you. I hope you will feel it has been 100% worthwhile. We certainly do.