



April 24, 2019

Dear Editor of the Guardian:

Thank you for sounding the alarm yesterday about the US threat to veto the UN Security Council resolution on rape as a weapon of war. ([US threatens to veto UN resolution on rape as weapon of war, officials say.](#)) Today we learned the resolution was approved without the mention of sexual and reproductive health services, to which the US objected.

We, at Global Doctors for Choice, supported the inclusion of references to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and safe termination of pregnancy in the resolution. We joined the recommendations of the report from the UN secretary-general on conflict-related sexual violence, and its inclusion of strengthening services for the survivors of sexual violence by ensuring comprehensive sexual and reproductive care. With the widespread and systematic gang rapes of women and girls in Burma; institutionalized sexual slavery by ISIS in Syria and Iraq; and the rape of young girls in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, among other places, pregnancies become a devastating reality that accompanies these heinous crimes.

It is clear that it is urgent to ensure sexual and reproductive health services, including access to emergency contraception, safe termination of pregnancy and HIV prevention to survivors, but the current US administration seems undeterred by the atrocities seen to date or by the ethical need here to put medical evidence and science above political ideology. Such ideology has no place in medicine.

Global Doctors for Choice is an international network of physicians from a range of specialties committed to improving women's reproductive health and rights. We are committed to high-quality medical care grounded in science and to the defense of human rights. We have members in more than 30 countries, and they know first-hand the terrible consequences women suffer when they have no access to reproductive health services. As doctors, our duty is to our patients. We are shocked by the insensitive exclusion of services that are so vital.

Wendy Chavkin, MD, MPH
Board Member, Global Doctors for Choice
New York, USA