

Statement of Armenia: Ninth Open Debate On the Protection Of Civilians In
Armed Conflict: 7 July 2010

Mrs. Khoudaverdian (Armenia):

I thank you, Madam President, for organizing this essential debate. At the outset, we would like to join previous speakers in thanking the Secretary-General for his briefing and in commending Under-Secretary-General John Holmes for his tireless and noble efforts and his exceptional contribution in systematically addressing this important issue in this Chamber. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

Armenia aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union. However, we would like to make some remarks in our national capacity.

The frequency with which the Security Council addresses this issue underscores the urgency of the matter and the need for the international community to fulfil its commitments to protecting civilians through the implementation of the provisions of international humanitarian law. Therefore, we share the views expressed by the Council's members and other speakers, which call for more systematic attention to protection, and we believe that it should be frequently reflected in the deliberations of the Security Council. We also trust that increased efforts to fight impunity at the national and international levels are essential. Armenia therefore welcomes this opportunity to recap and reflect on the Council's past 10 years of experience in dealing with the issue of the protection of civilians and to highlight priority aspects for united practical actions.

In a lessons-learned process, this debate should also enable the Council to more effectively address specific concerns related to the protection of civilian populations. The Council has to send a clear message to all parties to armed conflicts, reminding them of their obligations and condemning violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. It is unfortunate that, despite the existence of international legal instruments and normative mechanisms, innocent civilians — including women, children and elderly persons — as well as international humanitarian personnel, continue to suffer in conflict situations. We are convinced that, in order to address the situation, we must abandon selective approaches to violations of international humanitarian law. There must also be strict adherence to human rights standards. Armenia believes that the international community must effectively seek the thorough compliance of all parties with the norms of international humanitarian law.

The peaceful resolution of any conflict is not an easy enterprise and requires strong political will and painful compromises from both sides. We believe, however, that the time has come to replace the unchanged rhetoric of hollow allegations with constructive steps aimed at making the environment more conducive to peaceful

settlement. Armenia remains committed to the peaceful resolution of conflicts and strongly believes that the fundamental solution of the problem can be achieved only by peaceful means based on the principles of international law.

We believe that the Security Council should further contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law and upholding the international law also by supporting criminal justice mechanisms. Undoubtedly, the prosecution of those responsible for these crimes continues to be an urgent matter. We strongly condemn deliberate attacks on and killings of civilians through the indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force, which is a gross violation of international humanitarian law in any conflict, in any part of the world.

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