



**BANGLADESH**

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Statement by

**Mohammad Sarwar Mahmood**

Counsellor

Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations  
at the Open Debate on "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" at the Security  
Council

New York, 7 July 2010

Madam President,

Let me begin by congratulating Nigeria on its assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of July 2010. I thank you, Madam President, for convening this important meeting. Allow me also to express our sincere thanks to the Secretary General for his insightful briefing this morning. My delegation also commends the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. John Holmes, and Ms. Navanethem Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights for their comprehensive briefing this morning.

Madam President,

Civilians continue to suffer the brunt of violence during armed conflicts. These civilians are displaced from their homes and are often denied access to life-saving food, medicine and shelter. It is against this backdrop that the States Members of the Organization pledged in the Millennium Declaration "to expand and strengthen the protection of civilians in complex emergencies".

Protection for civilians is a basic principle of humanitarian law: civilians not taking part in the fighting must on no account be attacked and must be spared and protected. The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols contain specific rules to protect civilians. In situations that are not covered by these treaties, in particular internal disturbances, civilians are protected by the fundamental principles of humanitarian law and human rights law.

The Council has been discussing this important issue for more than a decade and has adopted many resolutions and heard strong and relevant statements by distinguished delegates. However, ironically, a large number of civilians continue to be exposed to the atrocities of conflict. My delegation urges all parties to conflicts to ensure protection of the lives and property of civilians.

My delegation condemns all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and stresses the need to combat impunity, safeguard access for humanitarian assistance and protect the safety of humanitarian aid workers.

Peacekeeping operations are one of the most important tools available to the United Nations to protect civilians in armed conflict. The Security Council's thematic resolution S/RES/1894 (2009), the updated aide-mémoire (S/PRST/2009/1, annex) and the inclusion of protection activities in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions have been important steps forward. However, at the same time, the gap between the words on the protection mandates and their actual implementation still seems to remain. In this regard, my delegation would like to re-emphasize the importance of the

principle of the responsibility to protect, as endorsed in the 2005 World Summit Outcome, in preventing harm to civilians in armed conflict.

The vulnerable situation of civilians in post-conflict societies needs special attention. Long after guns have fallen silent, such people remain traumatized and permanently scarred by the brutalities of war. For peace to be sustained, they must be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities more effectively, and the perpetrators must bear the resultant cost.

The presence of uniformed female personnel may play a pivotal role in protecting civilians in armed conflict. May I take this opportunity to refer to the efforts of the all-women Bangladesh police contingent working in peace keeping mission in Haiti. We believe that a female-police force could also play a critical role in a State's ability to protect its citizens.

Madam President,

Finally, we would like to mention what my delegation considers two overarching themes for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. *The first* relates to prevention and the building of a culture of peace. Prevention is at the heart of protection. The preventive capacity of the Organization must be enhanced. At the same time, Member States need to take steps to inculcate the values of peace, tolerance and harmony that contribute to long-term prevention.

*The second* theme is that of coordination among all stakeholders. We believe that the protection of civilians is the primary justification for a United Nations presence in the field. However, despite some improvements, various political, humanitarian, military and development components of United Nations missions in the field still lack an integrated focus on the protection of civilians. My delegation stresses upon the effective coordination, particularly among the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA).

In conclusion, my delegation expresses its grave concern over the violations and breaches of international law, including international humanitarian laws. For example, total disregard and rejection of humanitarian and international laws and values especially being committed by occupation forces in the occupied territories of Palestine for years is a disgrace for humanity. My delegation strongly urges the international community, particularly the Council, to take effective steps to ensure respect for and compliance with the Geneva Conventions in such situation.

I thank you, Madam President.