

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Regina Maria Cordeiro Dunlop
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Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

June 25, 2012

Mr. President,

I congratulate China for the initiative of promoting this timely debate. I would like to thank Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his very informative briefing and the report submitted. I thank also USG for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos for her presentation.

Our appreciation also goes to ASG for Human Rights Ivan Simonovic and the Director of International Law of the ICRC Philip Spoerri for their briefings.

Mr. President,

Protecting civilians is one of the most important ways through which the United Nations can give concreteness to its ultimate objectives, as set out in the Charter.

This session demonstrates renewed commitment in our efforts to advance the conceptual framework and the tools for the protection of civilians and prevent the horrendous atrocities described by the Secretary General's report issued last May.

Mr. President,

The plight of innocent civilians who remain victims of the horrors of conflict demands that we reflect on why effective implementation remains a challenge, in spite of progress on the protection agenda.

Brazil believes the five core challenges identified by the Secretary-General in 2009 remain critical and must be the primary focus of our attention. We also believe the additional recommendations, made by the Secretary-General in his 2012 report, deserve the careful attention of this Council.

In this context, we stress the importance that this Council calls for respect and adherence to International Humanitarian Law in a consistent and non-selective manner.

The work of peacekeeping operations and other protection actors in assisting Governments to build the necessary capacity to perform their primary responsibility to protect their citizens is vital. It is also very important to express recognition for the work of protection actors on the ground.

DPKO and DFS have, for example, developed a protection of civilians resource and capability matrix to assist missions in applying resources and capabilities to the implementation of protection mandates. Furthermore, training modules on the protection of civilians have been finalized.

In addition, there is also commendable work developed by other actors, as humanitarian organizations, including ICRC and various NGOs, which play a long-established and critical role in seeking to enhance the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

Mr. President,

In its Presidential Statement dated 22 November 2010, the Council, with the support of Brazil, expressed its deep regret that civilians accounted for the vast majority of casualties in armed conflict.

Long-term protection can only be ensured if we can contribute to sustainable solutions to conflicts. Helping States move along the path of political reconciliation and development is, ultimately, the best contribution of the United Nations to long-term protection of civilians. In that sense, the Council should strengthen the importance of this dimension when drafting peacekeeping mandates. Brazil believes that, after all, the protection of civilians can best be achieved if we prevent conflicts from happening.

It is the emphasis on diplomacy and cooperation that reduces the risks of armed conflict and the human costs associated with it.

That is why Brazil, through the concept of Responsibility while Protecting, has called on the international community to demonstrate renewed commitment

and strengthened confidence in its capacity to make use of the tools established by the UN Charter for the prevention of conflicts and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In this regard, let me conclude by commending the Secretary-General for the initiative to establish 2012 as the year of prevention. Other relevant initiatives, such as the Group of “Friends of Mediation”, can be seen to fall into the same spirit of pursuing the protection of civilians through diplomacy, dialogue, negotiation and prevention.

In line with the principles and purposes of the San Francisco Charter, it is never enough to stress that the international community must be rigorous in its efforts to value, pursue and exhaust all peaceful means available for the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

This will certainly be the best expression of our commitment to the protection of civilians.

Thank you.