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## Statement by Amb. Wang Min at the Security Council Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts

2010/07/07



Madam President,

I wish to thank Nigeria for taking the initiative to convene this open debate. I'd also like to thank Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, USG Holmes and the High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms Pillay for their statements. During his tenure, Sir John Holmes has made outstanding contribution to the United Nations in the area of humanitarian assistance. I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation and to wish him all the best during his future endeavours.

Madam President,

In recent years, the Security Council has accorded high importance to the protection of civilians and made vigorous efforts to that end. However, because of the changing characteristics of armed conflicts and various complex factors, civilians in many regions of the world still find themselves in harm's way in armed conflicts. The international community faces an uphill battle in ensuring protection of civilians. We are deeply concerned that in some armed conflicts, civilians are subject to dangers and violations and we urge the parties to those conflicts to abide by the international humanitarian law and the relevant Security Council resolutions and protect the life and property of civilians and their legitimate rights and interests.

Madam President, China supports the Security Council in making further efforts to strengthen the protection of civilians in armed conflicts. In this connection, I wish to emphasize the following points:

First, start from the source and address this problem in a holistic manner. As the organ entrusted with the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, the Security Council is duty bound to address the question of protecting civilians in armed conflicts. The Council should pay attention to the source of the problem, invest more energy in the prevention and control of conflicts and, at the same time, put the protection of civilians in the overall framework of the political process for peaceful settlement of disputes.

Secondly, stress the responsibility of the states concerned and respect their wishes. The responsibility of protecting civilians lies primarily with the national governments. While the international community can provide constructive help, it must do so in compliance with the provisions of the UN Charter, respect the sovereignty of the countries concerned and refrain from forcible intervention. Dialogue between the UN and non-state armed groups should be carried out within the framework of the cooperation between the UN and the countries concerned and with the consent of the governments concerned. In combating impunity, we are in favor of letting the domestic judicial system of the countries concerned play the role of the main channel.

Thirdly, progress step by step and concentrate on implementation. On the question of the protection of civilians, we have in place a comparatively complete set of international legal rules. The key is to ensure the comprehensive, equitable and effective implementation of the existing rules. The relevant UN organs and international treaty bodies should continue to play an important role to this end. The Security Council has already adopted quite a number of resolutions and presidential statements on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts and our task in the next stage should be

pushing for the effective implementation of these documents.

Fourthly, proceed from the actual situation and adapt to local specificities. Giving a UN peacekeeping mission the mandate of protecting civilians is a decision made by the Council on a case-by-case basis. In our view, in designing the mandate of civilian protection, it is necessary to base ourselves on the actual needs and take into integrated consideration of the situation on the ground and the resource and capacity of the peacekeeping mission concerned. It is necessary to steer away from generalization. We are not in favor of invariably authorizing all peacekeeping operations with the mandate of civilian protection in disregard of practical conditions. The adherence to the three principles of "consent of the country concerned, impartiality and non-use of force unless in self-defense" is the key for the success of peacekeeping operations. Any deviation from these basic principles will, instead of helping with civilian protection, cause more conflicts and problems, even to the point of jeopardizing the success of the peacekeeping operation concerned.

Madam President,

The absolute majority of current conflicts are taking place in areas with backward economic and social conditions. The United Nations should actively mobilize international resources to provide financial and technical assistance to the countries concerned so as to help them develop economy and eradicate poverty at an early date, thus eliminating the source of conflicts. We look forward to a greater role in this respect to be played by the UNGA, ECOSOC, UNDP, international institutions such as the World Bank and regional organizations.

Thank you, Madam President.

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