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**HAROLD KNIGHT ACTION IS  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF GUATEMALA  
OPEN DEBATE ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT  
SECURITY COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

(June 25, 2012)

Mr. President:

I am glad that my presence in New York to address issues outside the Board of I provide security, however, the opportunity to accompany the third time since taking post of Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guatemala for six months. I also take this opportunity to thank the Secretary General for the presentation of its ninth report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the intervention of Deputy General Secretary Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos, and intervention High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, read by the Assistant Secretary General for Human Rights, Ivan Simonovic.

I am also grateful to the Director of International Law and Cooperation Committee International Red Cross, Philip Spoerri presentation. Indeed, their presence underscores the enormous potential to strengthen informal alliances between the United Nations, the Red Cross International community and nongovernmental organizations that monitor aspects humanitarian and specifically the protection of civilians in conflict situations. The same would, of course, about the potential for more formal partnerships in this area between the United Nations and the regional and sub-regional.

Mr. President:

The protection of human life in general and the protection of civilian populations of the terrible consequences of armed conflict, are at the heart of the rationale of Nations Together, and even were the main source of inspiration for the adoption of the Charter, after the horrors of two world wars of the twentieth century.

Most of the reports we have known about the protection of civilians in conflict - and its corollaries, such as protection of women and children, and aid workers - say Resolution 1265 of 1999 as the beginning of a new and fruitful phase of matter in the work Security Council

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. But it could be argued that conflict prevention at its root, the core mandate of the Security Council, is the most effective way to protect civilians from the ravages of war. In that sense, the underlying theme has been the work of the Council since its mere creation.

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See, inter alia: UNSC Resolution 1296 (2000), 1325 (2000), 1674 (2006), 1738 (2006) and 1894 (2009).

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That said, it is undeniable that since 1999 the Council has taken a quantum leap in add to their work generic to preserve peace and international security measures and tangible point intended to protect innocent civilians from armed conflict, when, unfortunately, such conflicts occur.

In the not too distant past, the troops that participated in stability operations or peacekeeping were forced to be passive witnesses, without able to intervene, for serious violations that caused the conflicting parties to the civilian population. Today, a growing number of Security Council resolutions that establish those operations contains very explicit mandates on the protection of civilians. Today, in contrast to the past, these conflicts tend to be inter-state, not between two states. Unfortunately, the main victims of those conflicts are always innocent civilians, often children, and especially women, who suffer grotesque abuses against life, dignity and most fundamental human rights.

We can not tolerate images of dead, injured, disabled, maimed, tortured,

stripped of all their belongings, and displaced, often victims of explosive weapons high impact, mines, and direct attacks. However, these atrocities happen every day, in different geographical areas of the planet. This, besides being a disgrace to our humanity, reflects a serious failure of sovereign states that do not meet any of its obligations primary, which is the protection of its citizens. Speaking from the perspective of my own country, I say that those images against us. Therefore, we have actively participated through our operations effective peacekeeping mandates with strong protection civilians, as, for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Our government is identified with the policies that this Council and the Secretariat itself have been developed over the years. Many of these policies are codified in the Presidential Statement 25, of 22 November 2010, especially in the detailed annex. Also endorse the conclusions and recommendations of the Ninth Report of the Secretary-General has on this occasion. We appreciate the update and development of the five basic challenges identified in previous reports

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. Looking ahead, continue to participate in the work Informal Expert Group on Protection of Civilians.

We also appreciate the full incorporation into our discussions of some topics insufficiently developed in previous reports, such as limited access humanitarian population needs food, water and medical products; staff attacks humanitarian law, health centers and ambulances carrying wounded to the centers, the Kidnapping of aid workers, the difficult situation facing migrant workers and their families in situations of conflict and theft of equipment and supplies for the humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, now that we have adhered to the Rome Statute, insist further in the accountability of those - whether governments or authorities armed groups state - that in situations of conflict, blatantly violated international law and humanitarian law applicable to deliberately attack the civilian population.

We echo also paragraph 21 of the Report of the Secretary-General, in the background posed not to politicize the noble task of humanitarian aid. We have not made a secret of our support of the norm of the Responsibility to Protect, which certainly is overlap and matches with the protection of civilians. But we think that the debate persists about the call

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Promote respect for international law by the parties in conflict, promote compliance by part of non-state armed groups, strengthening the protection by the United Nations missions to the peacekeeping and other relevant missions, improve access for humanitarian assistance and promote accountability account when it violates the law.

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"Third pillar" of the Responsibility to Protect should not contaminate the broader concept, rooted humanitarian law, which is the subject that brings us together on this occasion.

Mr. President:

Two final words. First, we favor the use of modules training for the Protection of Civilians developed by the Department of Operations Peacekeeping and the Department of Support for Field Activities, and these are people are giving the military and police missions for the mandate to provide protection to civilians. This means, among other things, projecting into the future the considerable United Nations advances have occurred in the field of protection of civilians in situations of conflict. Second, we pay tribute to all those involved in past and present in the maintenance of peace, which, no doubt, have been directly responsible for saving millions of lives. It is unfortunate, however, that this task is far from been completed.

Thank you very much.