

**Statement by Ambassador Eshagh Al Habib  
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran  
to the United Nations under the agenda item  
"Protection of civilians in armed conflict"  
before the United Nations Security Council  
(25 June 2012, New York)**

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

**Mr. President,**

We appreciate the convening this open debate on the "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" and thank Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and other briefers for their statements today.

**Mr. President**

The upheavals in parts of Middle East and North Africa in the past couple of years has brought the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict to a prominent place on the Council's agenda. This fact has manifested itself in holding these regular open debates, presentation of reports and holding of workshops and thematic meetings on the protection of civilians. The incidences of violence against civilian population in conflict situations have allowed us to identify measures to protect civilians under armed conflict circumstances. Yet, the reality on the grounds has also affected the notion as well as the practical measures in protecting the civilians. Despite the fact that there has been some progress on the issue of civilian protection, there have been many failures along the way. A large part of the reason for that distressing state of affairs lies in the double standards and injustices in different armed conflict, including the situation of territories under foreign occupation, as well as the fundamental failure of some parties to respect the principles of international and humanitarian law.

The Secretary-General in his latest report on this issue while recalling the five core challenges on the protection of civilians; emphasizes the necessity of enhancing compliance with international human rights and humanitarian law and enhancing accountability in the protection of civilians. He rightly points out that in many conflicts to a large degree the accountability is the absent factor that allows further violations to thrive. This became clearer in the response of the Security Council to the situation in Libya where the Council authorized all necessary measures to protect civilians but the extent of the measures went beyond the protection of civilians and thus raised major concerns among member states. For this reason the Secretary General recommends that "in the future, in addition to complying scrupulously with international humanitarian law and human rights law, the implementation of such decisions must be limited to promoting and ensuring the protection of civilians."

**Mr. President,**

The root causes behind many conflicts are poverty, exclusion and marginalization, foreign interventions and military excursions and occupation. In addressing the sufferings of the civilians in the armed conflicts we should take stock of these causes. However, the influence exercised by some members of the Security Council in reaching a balanced solution to a conflict have sometimes exacerbated the conflicts and contributed to their prolongation, with severe impacts on peace and stability and the protection of civilians. In this regard, I would like to refer to the case of Syria. We firmly believe that the current crisis should be promptly resolved based on the initiatives of Kofi Annan and active and constructive engagement of all parties concerned. The prolongation of this crisis for whatever narrow-minded political interests would have dire consequences on the peace and stability in the region as well as civilians in Syria.

**Mr. President,**

Premeditated attacks on civilians as the result of indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force or the massive terrorist operations are gross violations of international humanitarian law. All parties to an armed conflict, including international coalition troops, must bear the responsibility for their acts under international humanitarian law. Those guilty of violations, State or non-State actors alike, must not evade responsibility for crimes committed.

I would like, here, to refer to an unpalatable yet brutal reality of indiscriminate targeting of civilian in Afghanistan and Pakistan during the air strikes, where in many instances resulted in high number of civilian casualties in such bombings. This fact has also been noted in the resolutions adopted in different organs of the United Nations where serious concern were expressed about the high number of civilian casualties and

they called for compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law and for the appropriate measures to ensure the protection of civilians.

**Mr. President,**

We hope the international community would take all the measures necessary for the protection of civilians on the basis of fairness and without double standards. Justice demands that the perpetrators of violations of rights of the people, including the people living under occupation hold accountable for their deeds. This is extremely important for the credibility of the Council. If we want our debate on the protection of civilians be meaningful and effective, we should have a balanced and a comprehensive approach, and see the causes and the effects. We hope that these discussions will be successful and that we will take the necessary measures, because this question is extremely important for humans and human dignity.

Finally, **Mr. President**, the Representative of the Israeli regime, once again, used this august body and in the name of protection of civilians leveled some baseless allegations against Iran. This criminal regime referred to arms smuggling from Iran to Hamas and Lebanon. This is a slander, because this regime in its brutal and killing apparatus excluded the civilian population in Gaza and other occupied territories from the jurisdiction of international law as if these people do not deserve the protection as required under the Geneva conventions and international law. One million and half Palestinians in Gaza are deprived of all their basic needs of life and of humanitarian assistance, including United Nations assistance. Gaza has continued to be the largest prison kept by the Israeli occupying authorities. Many civilian homes continue to be targeted with Israeli missiles which constitute premeditated attacks against the civilian population and civilian objects. The crimes committed by the Israeli armed forces in deliberate killings and causing great suffering to civilians constitutes grave breaches of international law, in particular the Fourth Geneva Convention and therefore should be held accountable. Only through ensuring accountability for serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights, and ensuring justice for victims that we could expect our efforts for the protection of civilians would be translated into meaningful and practical actions.

I thank you **Mr. President** for your attention.

----