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**STATEMENT BY FAZLI ÇORMAN
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OF TURKEY TO THE UN
SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE
ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT**

7 July 2010

Madame President,

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive statement. I also thank Under-Secretary General Mr. Holmes and High Commissioner for Human Rights Madame Pillay for their extensive briefings.

Madame President,

Majority of casualties in armed conflicts continue to be civilians. We strongly condemn all deliberate attacks on civilians and the deaths resulting from the indiscriminate and excessive use of force.

As Secretary-General outlined in his statement, we are still witnessing challenges in different parts of the world in this field. However, the recent debates at the Council on protection of civilians were held under the shadow of the tragic developments in Gaza. This one is not an exception. Needless to say, recent incidents there reminded us all once again for full compliance with international law, principle of proportionality and the importance of ensuring safe access to civilian populations, particularly to vulnerable groups such as women, children and disabled.

Protection of civilians – all civilians – is a moral imperative. International law has developed a plethora of rules to protect civilians, and as the High Commissioner for Human Rights also indicated, all parties to armed conflict must be held accountable to these rules. Still, even when parties fully comply with the applicable law, many civilians become victims nonetheless. Turkey calls on parties to armed conflict to make amends to the civilians they harm in the same spirit and in view of their inherent human dignity.

In this context, we would like to once again bring our expectations regarding the investigation on the humanitarian convoy destined to Gaza to the Council's attention.

Madame President,

Primary obligation for protecting civilians lies with states. International community has also a responsibility to help protect civilians in situations where states fail to do so. We have to address the actual problems on the ground including our decisions on peacekeeping mandates as well.

Turkey considers the adoption of Security Council resolution 1894 last November to be a turning point. We welcome the increased attention paid by the Council to protection issues. We recognize the importance of Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, as well as on children and armed conflict to further promote the protection agenda. We welcome the recently adopted resolutions on these areas. As we have been stressing for a long time, a stronger interaction between the Council, troop and police contributors, SRSGs and missions contributes to greater coherence.

Protection of civilians during peace keeping operations is another challenge. The commemoration of the tragedy of Srebrenica this week should be a reminder for all of us.

Madame President,

We note the fruitful discussions on the protection agenda. We fully support them. However, we have three general observations:

Firstly, there is an inclination to stress the importance of dialogue with non-state armed groups. While understanding its rationale, we believe that this new trend requires further and careful elaboration on both political and legal aspects.

Secondly, naming counter terrorist efforts as “armed conflict” cannot be accepted. We strongly condemn acts of terrorism and use of civilians as human shields, and acknowledge the legitimate right of the Governments to combat terrorism.

Thirdly, the Protection of Civilians and the Responsibility to Protect concepts should not be mixed to each other for their own benefit. In our view, they are two different concepts that must not be confounded.

Madame President,

We should strengthen the rule of law, human rights, democracy and good governance for the long-term and lasting protection of civilians. And we should ensure that the perpetrators of violence against civilians are held fully accountable for their actions. They should know that they will face justice eventually.

I would like to conclude by thanking USG John Holmes for his excellent and tireless work for the UN's humanitarian cause and wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

Thank you.