



**CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY  
VÉRIFIER AU PRONONCÉ**

**STATEMENT BY  
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**TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE  
ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT**

**NEW YORK, 4 DECEMBER 2006**

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**DÉCLARATION DE  
L'AMBASSADEUR JOHN MCNEE  
REPRÉSENTANT PERMANENT DU CANADA AUPRÈS DES NATIONS UNIES**

**AU DÉBAT PUBLIC DU CONSEIL DE SÉCURITÉ DES NATIONS UNIES  
SUR LA PROTECTION DES CIVILS EN PÉRIODE DE CONFLIT ARMÉ**

**NEW YORK, LE 4 DÉCEMBRE 2006**

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to thank Qatar for convening this open debate. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the Emergency Relief Coordinator for his statement today and for the passion, commitment and leadership he has brought to protecting civilians worldwide during his tenure.

Populations should live in reasonable expectation that they will not be subject to serious violations of human rights or international humanitarian law. People should not live in daily fear that they will be deliberately targeted. Yet millions of people around the world are targeted and remain displaced and dispossessed. In the Darfur region of Sudan, Sri Lanka, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Northern Uganda, men, women and children face daily threats including the very right to life.

Today, I want to focus my remarks on three key themes. First, the Security Council must demonstrate courageous leadership and unwavering political will to ensure that populations at risk have access to the greatest protection possible. Second, continued emphasis must be placed on ending impunity - perpetrators of attacks against civilians in violation of international law must be held accountable for their actions. Third, we all share in the responsibility to advance a culture of protection. The Council, the UN Secretariat and agencies and Member States must make advocacy, monitoring and capacity building watch words for our efforts.

Since the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict was first brought onto the Security Council agenda, important and practical progress has been made - in the field, agencies are devoting greater attention to refining their abilities to meet protection needs; UN missions are authorized to use force to deter and respond to attacks on civilians and some are organizing themselves so that civilian protection acts as a unifying cross-mission theme. In addition, new sanctions regimes have been more attentive to targeting their impact so as to mitigate unintended humanitarian consequences. Canada welcomes the adoption of resolution 1674 earlier this year as a means to further advance earlier Council commitments to give priority to the protection of civilians agenda.

Nevertheless efforts to date suggest that international community action on this agenda, including by the Security Council, remains uneven, and the necessity of convening these regular debates has not diminished. We need look no further than the grave humanitarian situation in Darfur to understand that our vigilance must not wane. We are deeply concerned by the continuing violence and the persistent culture of impunity in Darfur. We condemn persistent incidences of violence and in particular sexual and gender-based violence by all parties, including in IDP camps where rape continues to be used as a weapon of war. We continue to call for an immediate end to the ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in Darfur and an end to the persistent culture of impunity in Darfur. We urge Sudan to prevent further violations, to ensure perpetrators are brought to justice in accordance with international law, and to facilitate humanitarian action.

Similarly the recent shelling of an internally displaced persons camp near Vakarai, Sri Lanka highlights the heavy price paid by civilians in this long-standing conflict - particularly where perceptions of civilians have grown ambiguous, and thus their targeting, recruitment as child soldiers, or denial of assistance to them, is no longer viewed as taboo by some actors. We urge the parties to the conflict to exercise the utmost restraint, and to fulfill their obligations under international humanitarian law, including by promoting the protection of civilians and facilitating safe and unhindered access for humanitarian agencies to civilians in need.

Mr. President,

The linkage between civilian protection and the maintenance of international peace and security is well established. The Security Council has a direct role to play in encouraging and promoting the protection of civilians and Council members have repeatedly pledged that they, and the wider international community, will take steps in this regard. Our governments applaud this leadership and we will continue to support and monitor the implementation of the Council's commitments.

Looking ahead, the Council must be more proactive in responding to situations where civilians are at risk. Greater focus should be given to timely and credible preventative measures, in addition to restorative actions. This means drawing on the many levers at its disposal, including: good offices, envoys and monitoring missions. The Council should show leadership by demonstrating a greater willingness to draw on the UN's human rights mechanisms for early warning, while promoting preventative deployments, targeted sanctions, diplomatic initiatives and the adherence to and respect for international legal instruments in support of affected populations.

Strong and consistent resolutions are a critical cornerstone to ensuring that human rights and humanitarian agencies can be effective in pursuing protection concerns in the field. Where peace support operations are given protection mandates, these mandates must be unambiguous and backed up by adequate financial and human resources to facilitate civilian protection.

Effective action also requires consistent follow up. The Council must be proactive in monitoring the implementation of the protection related commitments under its consideration. This means drawing on lessons learned from missions with protection mandates as well as being prepared to re-think and readjust policy approaches when they fall short *vis a vis* the protection of civilians. The Security Council should outline specific actions, with timelines and benchmarks, to be taken by parties to a conflict and then monitor their implementation and be ready to apply penalties when actions are not taken. The message we send to parties to a conflict must be unequivocal; perpetrators of abuse will be held accountable for their actions. On Darfur, the Council - and the wider international community - has been divided and inconsistent. There must be consequences for countries who violate the arms embargo, and for all parties who continue to violate the peace agreements and the human rights of the people of Darfur.

We urge all parties to adhere to the principles agreed to in Addis Ababa, including the need to re-energize the political process, to establish a strengthened ceasefire, and to find a way forward for peacekeeping in Darfur. The Darfur crisis can only be resolved through a political process, not through violence. As an international community, we must promote these principles with one voice.

Field visits by the Council in such circumstances should continue to be a key element of its follow up and monitoring of the implementation of key resolutions. As we have noted before, Council missions provide an indispensable opportunity to urge parties to a conflict to allow safe and unimpeded access by aid workers to those in need; to reinforce that there will be no impunity for genocide and war crimes; and to ensure that UN missions are being vigilant in their efforts to protect civilians and for implementing strategies to meet the needs of displaced populations.

Mr. President,

A culture of protection also demands that attacks against civilians are recognized for the crimes that they are. There can be no impunity. States must prosecute those who commit genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes or other serious human rights violations. No amnesty should be granted for international crimes.

The Council, and the broader UN membership, have a particular responsibility to ensure that those who commit serious violations of international law are brought to justice, including attacks against those working in UN and related missions. We are concerned by on-going attacks on UN and associated personnel which persist with deadly consequences. A recent study has highlighted that attacks against aid workers are increasingly politically motivated, and that national staff are more at risk than ever before. Canada urges those Member States who have yet to sign or ratify the 1994 Convention on Safety and Security of UN and Associated Personnel and its Optional Protocol to do so. Member States must show willingness to investigate and prosecute the perpetrators of such acts whenever and wherever they occur.

Let me underscore our collective concern about the importance of also protecting and promoting the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In that respect, the security of journalists, particularly in armed conflict, requires our ongoing attention. It is also important that the UN can appropriately address hate media in its own mission planning and operations. If left unchecked hate media can further fan the flames of conflict and put populations at greater risk. Early efforts by the UN to counter hate media, and ensure those who propagate hatred are brought to justice, are important preventative steps that remain critical to the protection of civilians.

Mr. President,

While Council leadership is critical to enhancing the protection of civilians agenda, it is a responsibility that all of us - the Council, the UN Secretariat and agencies, and Member States - must share.

To the Secretariat and the UN agencies our governments encourage you to remain forthright in your assessments. Previous resolutions have given you the authority to bring to the attention of member states circumstances which demand their attention to protect civilians. Provide the Council and other appropriate bodies with concrete advice and recommendations, based on accurate data, in your reporting based on monitoring of situations on the ground.

We recognize that successful UN action will rest on the capacity of UN Country teams to lead and coordinate on protection issues. SRSG's, Humanitarian and Resident Coordinators, and individual staff must be capable and confident in raising protection concerns with relevant parties to conflict. Only modest progress has been made in this area, and this capacity must be further strengthened. In addition, those deployed with a UNSC mandate to protect civilians must better understand what is expected of them and share a common approach. To provide one example, collaboration among all actors is necessary to ensure that pre-deployment training for military and civilian police includes a specific focus on civilian protection where they will be responsible for such mandates.

The ten point plan that has been put forward by the Emergency Relief Coordinator requires our continued support. Each point represents a practical and essential component to ensuring enhanced protection to civilians in situations of armed conflict. We wholeheartedly endorse this platform.

A strong framework for the protection of civilians now exists. Resolutions 1265, 1296 and 1674 - along with those on conflict prevention, women, peace and security, children and armed conflict, safety of aid workers and impunity- lay out a clear set of mutually reinforcing Council commitments. And as much as they provide a framework for Council action, they equally provide a benchmark that all Member States can use to hold the Council accountable when action is slow to come.

Success is measured most directly in the lives saved, the displacement averted and in the mitigation and ending of conflicts. The Council, indeed the United Nations as a whole - including the Member States comprising it - will ultimately be judged by its willingness to make a tangible difference in the lives of people who need our help the most. Our actions must be concrete - making flexible and pragmatic use of the levers available to us. The Security Council can continue to count on Canada's support in responding to these difficult challenges.