



JAPAN

*Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations*

---

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N Y 10017 Phone (212)223 4300 . [www.un.int/japan/](http://www.un.int/japan/)

*Press Release*

(Please check against delivery)

Statement by Mr. Kenzo Oshima  
Permanent Representative of Japan  
On the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict  
Security Council  
9 December 2005

Mr. President,

I thank you for convening today's open debate on this important subject and also thank Under-Secretary-General Jan Egeland for his briefing to update us on key issues involved in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. I take the opportunity to express our high appreciation to USG Egeland and his OCHA team for their tireless work in advancing this agenda.

We welcome the Secretary-General's report, which presents the progress that has been made to date, the many challenges that remain, and several specific recommendations. All these are very valuable indeed, and provide the Council with fresh materials for thought and action. In fact, since the first adoption of a resolution on the subject in 1999, efforts to mainstream this agenda in the work of the Council have produced important concrete results. We see, for instance, the need for the protection of civilians being incorporated increasingly in peacekeeping mission mandates in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and elsewhere. And in this regard, the *Aide-Memoire* has proved a practical useful tool, as well as the timely briefings and inputs from the DPA, DPKO, OCHA, Funds, Programs and Agencies, and NGOs, for all of which we express thanks.

The Outcome Document endorsed by world leaders in September also contains significant agreements and concepts in moving humanitarian agenda forward. In particular, we regard as particularly important the reference to women and children in armed conflict, an acknowledgment, for the first time at the head-of-state level, of the Guiding Principles for Internal Displacement, and the clear enunciation on the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We should anchor our discussion in the Council on these milestone agreements. A proposal to review and expand the Central Emergency Revolving Fund also requires careful consideration.

Mr. President,

Despite these achievements, we still have much to do. The stark reality before our eyes is that of innocent civilians attacked and killed, subjected to damage, injury, humiliation and loss in their millions in armed conflict. Particular pain is inflicted on women and children, in the form of sexual violence and the forced recruitment of child soldiers. The Council needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that its efforts make a difference on the ground. From this viewpoint, I would like to briefly touch upon four points.

The first concerns the need for accurate information in considering appropriate measures in the Council. Regrettably, little reliable statistical data is available that would enable us to assess with certainty the field-level impact of our work in the Security Council on protecting civilians caught in armed conflict. On the question of how many war deaths there were in the past year, for example, there is wide discrepancy in the statistical data available. The largest figure given by one source is ten times the smallest one given by another source. Admittedly, work on collating these figures and numbers in these circumstances sometimes entails enormous difficulties. But nevertheless it is important that the Council has for its information more solid, reliable facts in considering the nature and scope of tasks and duties that a peacekeeping mission can realistically be expected to perform. To this end, it must have accurate information concerning those situations where civilians are caught in specific armed conflicts. Therefore, we support the establishment of a

reporting system that would allow UN agencies to improve work on this aspect, building upon the existing mechanisms with the aim of presenting more complete, coherent picture.

Second, it is essential to ensure humanitarian workers' access to people in dire need of help and assistance. We cannot assume that peacekeeping missions alone, now at their record high in terms of number and size, can cover all the protection need of civilians in armed conflict. Neither is it realistic to expect that peacekeeping missions will grow in size or that many more new missions will be established, given the fact that troop-contributing countries are already stretched thin in terms of the personnel they have committed to the many recent and ongoing operations.

In these circumstances, it is clear that humanitarian workers will continue to play, as they have in the past, a very important role in protecting civilians, as their presence also often deters violence against **civilian** populations. The reality that more civilian deaths are caused by malnutrition and infectious disease than by physical violence makes the work of humanitarian organizations all the more important. We pay high respect to humanitarian workers and their organizations for their dedication and noble spirit with which they carry out their mission in many difficult situations around the world.

In this context, Japan welcomes the strong and straightforward language on this subject in the September Outcome Document, and we call on all parties to armed conflicts to honor the request of the international community to grant access. In this connection, the common service, especially logistical assets including transportation, has a very important role to play in ensuring access to vulnerable **populations**. We welcome the increasing attention that is being given to the common service and wish to stress the importance of sufficient coordination and resources in this regard.

Third, the United Nations must strengthen its partnership with regional organizations. Regional experience and skills should be more fully utilized for effective protection of civilians. We welcome the African Union's efforts to play an increasingly important role in this area. We also commend OCHA for its initiative,

formulated in response to the call of the Council, to draft a work plan that will serve to engage systematically with regional organizations in the protection of civilians. Japan for its part will provide all possible assistance to the important work done by and through regional organizations.

Finally, from a **mid-** and long-term viewpoint, the establishment of rule of law and security sector reform are both indispensable and hold key to achieving effective protection of civilians. We have high expectations that the Peacebuilding Commission, the establishment of which we hope will be agreed soon, would make a valuable contribution to the effort to address these issues. In the DRC, we understand that MONUC has no other option than putting criminals in its own facilities, as national authorities cannot provide the prison facilities necessary to confine them. Under these circumstances, we cannot realistically expect that impunity will end, and clearly the capacity-building of national authorities should therefore be given priority. The education of children, especially those who have had painful experiences as child soldiers, needs to be more emphasized in the efforts of the international community to put an end to the vicious circle of violence.

In conclusion, Mr. President, I would like to express our appreciation for the initiative you have taken on the Council's resolution on this issue. We believe that the Council should now consolidate its past achievements and lay out the directions for future action in clear and bold terms. We strongly support the draft resolution and look forward to its early adoption, with some possible new inputs from the deliberations during this open debate.

Thank you very much.