

بِسْمِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



STATEMENT
OF
THE STATE OF QATAR

DELIVERED BY

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BEFORE

The Open Debate of the UN Security Council

ON

Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

NEW YORK, 22 JUNE 2007

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Mr. President,

Thank you for convening this important open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflicts, for it is considered part and parcel of the continuous efforts by the international community and the Council to strengthen the protection of civilians, especially vulnerable groups, including women and children, living in conflict zones. I would like also to thank Mr. John Holmes, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator for his important briefing to the Council .

Mr. President,

Since February 1999, the Security Council has adopted several resolutions that embody the increasing commitment by the international community to develop and improve ways to address the tragic suffering of civilians living in areas of armed conflict. Those resolutions, especially Security Council resolution 1674 (2006), have condemned the deliberate targeting of civilians, acts of violence and attacks against civilians, forced displacement of civilians, and the intentional denial of humanitarian assistance. Despite those efforts, our world is still witnessing today an increase in the cases of deliberate targeting of civilians by terrorist attacks, humanitarian workers have not been spared by that targeting, and civilians living in conflict areas are still suffering from the scourge of forced displacement. There are also cases that cause grave concern, namely the killings of civilians by mistake in conflict areas or in areas where military operations have been taking place. This situation requires from all parties in those areas to take necessary measures that prevent putting civilians in harm's way according to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 .

Mr. President,

In this regard, we would like to recall Security Council Resolution 1674 (2006) in order to stress the principle contained in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, i.e. the principle of the "responsibility to protect civilians" from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. We would like also to emphasize that, theoretically, the principle of "responsibility to protect civilians" is a critical humanitarian

principle, for it embodies a noble humanitarian value, namely defending innocent people, whose only fault is that they live in proximity of conflict-ridden areas, and who, in most cases, are intentionally targeted for political and ideological objectives. From a practical perspective and as far as implementation is concerned, we should be cautious though in dealing with this principle so as it would not to be exploited and abused. If we are to apply this principle while respecting that ideal concept, we should ensure that our objectives would not be politicized, and would be above individual interests and reflect purely humanitarian motives .

Mr. President,

What we lack today is the effective implementation of actions and measures contained in the relevant Security Council resolutions, aiming at improving the conditions of civilians in areas of armed conflict. We would like to stress in this regard that the parties to the armed conflicts, be they governments or non-government actors, bear the responsibility of full compliance with the commitments to which they are bound under the international law and relevant Security Council resolutions because the responsibility to protect civilians rests first and foremost with the States concerned. The role of the international community is to provide the necessary protection to civilians, and to find means to mediate in the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations and intervention under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations in conflict areas are merely contingency solutions that require further action to put a final and urgent end to conflicts.

Mr. President,

Security Council Resolution 1674 (2006) contains classifications of the groups of civilians suffering from the scourge of armed conflicts and in need of assistance and protection. That classification has failed, however, to include the category of persons with disabilities in areas of conflict, in spite of the serious impact that armed conflicts have on that category. We recall in this regard General Assembly resolution 61/131 on the implementation of the World Program of Action for Disabled Persons, that refers to the concern about the devastating consequences of the continuing armed conflict on the human rights of persons with disabilities, as well as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of

Persons with Disabilities, whose preamble stresses the importance of providing full protection to persons with disabilities, particularly in the situations of armed conflict and foreign occupation. In this regard, we would like to underline the importance that, in his next report on the protection of civilians in areas of conflict to be submitted in October 2007, the Secretary-General should not overlook the conditions of the group of persons with disabilities in the areas of conflict in order to strengthen and improve the means to meet the needs of this group in such areas .

Finally, we would like to reaffirm our full commitment to promoting and strengthening the protection of civilians in areas of conflict in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Thank you.