

**Security Council Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict**  
**Monday, 22nd November 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)**

*Statement by Mr. Octavio Errazuriz Guilisasti, Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations*

Chile thanks the United Kingdom, in its capacity as President of the Security Council for November, for having convened this debate on such an important subject as the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/579) and welcome the briefings we have heard from representatives of the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross on this issue. Chile associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Costa Rica on behalf of the Human Security Network.

More than a decade has passed since the first peacekeeping operation was deployed in Sierra Leone with an explicit mandate to protect civilians. Through these years, we have accumulated important experience and, at the same time, established a broad legal framework through the Council's thematic resolutions on the protection of civilians and other historic resolutions. We have also made significant progress in peacekeeping operations, virtually all of which are now involved in activities related to the protection of civilians and eight of which have specific physical protection mandates.

In that context, peacekeeping operations have become multidimensional and have distinct components linked to the protection of civilians, such as the monitoring of human rights, humanitarian assistance, capacity-building, the restoration of infrastructure and services, and security sector reform, among others. Chile believes that a comprehensive approach is the most effective way to address and respond to threats to the human security of civilian populations in armed conflict. However, despite the greater attention that has been paid by the Council and the aforementioned progress, the prevalence of civilian casualties and the number of people affected by armed conflict continue to be overwhelming. This is noted by the Secretary-General in his eighth report. We also continue to see the challenges that he noted in his report of 29 May 2009, in which he stressed the importance of "enhancing compliance by parties to conflict with international law...; enhancing compliance with the law by non-State armed groups; enhancing protection through more effective and better resourced peacekeeping and other relevant missions; enhancing humanitarian access; and enhancing accountability for violations of the law" (S/2009/277, para. 5).

Chile condemns the recurring attacks on camps for refugees and internally displaced persons and on humanitarian personnel. We also reject the use of sexual violence and forced displacement as tactics of war, the widespread recruitment of children, the proliferation in the illicit traffic and undue use of small arms and light weapons, and the danger represented by anti-personnel landmines and unexploded ordinance left over from warfare. We also deplore the use of civilians as human shields.

Chile welcomes both the normative measures that have been adopted and practices on the ground itself aimed at preventing and attenuating the effects of violence against civilians in armed conflict, as pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report. Chile also commends the establishment in the Security Council of the informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians. We appreciate its excellent work. We believe this to be an example to be duplicated in other instances, such as in the area of peacebuilding.

We also acknowledge the importance of including civilian protection as a component of the mandates of peacekeeping operations, including clear guidelines and intervention standards to effectively implement that aspect of the mission. That must be done without prejudice to the primary responsibility of host Governments to protect their own civilians. Increasing interaction between host countries, the Security Council, troop-contributing countries and the Secretariat could also help to narrow the gap between the decision-making process and real implementation on the ground. We were pleased to note the independent study by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations with regard to the implementation civilian protection mandates in peacekeeping operations.

Respecting and implementing international humanitarian law are inextricably linked to combating impunity. Eradicating impunity should be seen as part of a comprehensive focus on seeking sustainable peace, justice, truth and national reconciliation. Concerted efforts are required in cooperating with national judicial mechanisms in order to develop their capacities and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice and tried in

accordance with international standards. Restoring the rule of law, security sector reform and transitional justice mechanisms are key areas in which national systems should be strengthened and supported through effective international cooperation. The International Criminal Court and other “mixed” tribunals and courts have an important complementary function in trying persons suspected of having committed international crimes. It is of the utmost importance that national and international criminal justice institutions have all the necessary support on the ground. Chile supports all measures aimed at combating impunity, both at the national and international levels. Civilians affected by violence in armed conflicts have a right to reparations and compensation. In that regard, we should not ignore the value of symbolic reparations as a way to heal society’s wounds in post-conflict countries. I should like to conclude by once again emphasizing that States have the primary responsibility to protect civilians.