

Security Council Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, 12th February, 2014, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Nazarian, Permanent Mission of Armenia to the United Nations

At the outset, let me tell you, Madam President how pleased we are to see Lithuania presiding over the Security Council. I thank you for convening this open debate on an issue that is of considerable importance and great concern to many Member States. My delegation also joins previous speakers in thanking the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Under-Secretaries-General for Humanitarian Affairs and for Peacekeeping Operations, and the Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for their briefings, which very informatively shed light on the topic before us today.

We share the concerns raised in this Chamber regarding the innocent civilians who, sadly, often constitute an overwhelming majority of the victims in armed conflict. In particular, women and children continue to be the most vulnerable groups, subjected to various forms of extreme violence, resulting in grave humanitarian crises with huge population displacement in various parts of the world.

It is encouraging that the Council has made several important decisions relating to the protection needs of vulnerable groups during armed conflicts. It is also important that we recognize the humanitarian challenges in post-conflict situations. The effective implementation of protection tasks involves a broad range of actors. Local authorities must be engaged in mediation and resolution talks. It is equally important that those authorities fully engage with the United Nations and other humanitarian actors.

The unimpeded access of international aid actors, including the ICRC, non-governmental organizations working on demining and charities tending to vulnerable and needy populations, is a matter of vital importance and must be unconditionally guaranteed and sustained. The parties to a conflict should ensure that the most efficient means are available for reaching people in need with humanitarian assistance and protection, including in situations where that involves humanitarian and/or monitoring operations that cross lines of contact or international borders.

As a country that has suffered aggression and imposed war, we fully recognize that protecting people from mass atrocities and violence is an overarching responsibility that must bring together all of the critical functions of the United Nations and other international organizations.

Today, we remain gravely concerned by the humanitarian impact of the use of force. As a result of this unacceptable policy and practice, the situations of civilians living near borders and lines of contact are being further compounded. During previous debates on this subject, my delegation raised concerns regarding the border impact of snipers on civilian populations and facilities. Violent incidents affecting the lives of civilians must cease immediately.//Armenia advocates the need to end...

Armenia advocates the need to end all violence and provocations, including the kidnapping of civilians. We strongly believe that fundamental and lasting solutions to conflicts can be achieved only through peaceful means, based on the principles of international law and within internationally agreed formats. We emphasize once again that military force will not resolve conflicts and only prolong the suffering and hardships endured by people living in regions blighted by conflicts. Only a peaceful negotiated settlement can allow an entire region to move beyond the status quo towards a secure and prosperous future.

It is important that the Council be focused on the protection of civilians within the overall process of the peaceful resolution of disputes. Our approach must be built on the understanding that any comprehensive resolution should impartially and fully address the root causes of a conflict under discussion in order to prevent its renewal in the future and should provide reliable and adequate

security protection guarantees to the populations concerned, thereby ensuring sustainable peace and development.

Therefore, Armenia welcomes Lithuania's initiative to hold this debate, which offers a valuable opportunity to evaluate the progress on the implementation on previously adopted resolutions dealing with the issue of protection of civilians and highlight the core challenges and priorities for further united actions.