

## **Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict**

**10<sup>th</sup> May 2011, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)**

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

Thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important discussion on a topic that has gained sound public and political acknowledgement.

It is commendable that this body has continued its practice of holding open debates on the protection of civilians, featuring briefings by the UnderSecretaries-General and Assistant Secretary-General, which offer an analysis of the Council's action as compared with previous years and also touch upon important developments. In a lessons-learned process, this open debate should also enable the Council to more effectively address specific concerns related to the protection of civilian populations.

The Council has to send a clear message to all parties in armed conflict regarding their obligation and condemning violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. In this context, the Security Council should have clearly defined goals and priorities for its work. It is important that the Council, while preventing conflict, be focused on the protection of civilians within the overall process of peaceful resolution of disputes, because only by addressing the root causes of conflicts can sustainable peace be achieved, which in turn will contribute to the protection of civilians.

The frequency with which the Security Council addresses this issue reflects the urgency of the matter and the need for the international community to fulfil its commitments to protecting civilians through the implementation of provisions of international humanitarian law. Therefore, we share the views expressed by Council members and other speakers calling for more systematic attention to protection, and we believe that it should be frequently reflected in the deliberations of the Security Council.

We strongly condemn deliberate attacks on and the killing of civilians through the indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force, which is a gross violation of international humanitarian law in any conflict in any part of the world. In this context, increased efforts to fight impunity at the national and international levels are essential.

It is unfortunate that, despite the existence of international legal instruments and normative mechanisms, innocent civilians, including women and children, as well as international humanitarian personnel, continue to suffer in conflict situations. Undoubtedly, the prosecution of those responsible for crimes committed against peaceful populations continues to be an urgent matter. We believe that the Security Council should further contribute to the strengthening of the rule of law and the upholding of international law by supporting criminal justice mechanisms. The relevant United Nations entities and international treaty bodies should also continue to play their important role. The priority at this point is to ensure the comprehensive and effective implementation of existing norms.

Today's debate also offers an opportunity for the Council to evaluate progress on key issues, such as the implementation of resolution 1894 (2009), and to indicate areas where further focus is needed, including the enhancement of compliance with international humanitarian law and the strengthening of accountability for its violation. Ensuring such accountability and enhancing compliance with international legal obligations by parties to a conflict should be viewed as key elements of the Council's responsibility to maintain international peace and security. Bettering the use of established sanctions regimes and implementing the binding resolutions that call upon all States to adopt national legislation for the prosecution of individuals responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes are important in this context.

Armenia welcomes the French initiative to hold this open debate. It is an opportunity to recapitulate and reflect on the Council's past experiences in dealing with the issue of protection and to highlight priority aspects of the practical actions of the United Nations.