

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

*Statement by Mr. Peter Schwaiger, Deputy Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations*

Let me first thank UnderSecretary-General Amos for her first presentation to the Security Council. I would also like to thank UnderSecretary-General Le Roy, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navanethem Pillay, and Yves Daccord, Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross, for their participation in the debate today.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia align themselves with this statement. In the interest of time, I will deliver an abridged version of our statement.

Like other speakers today, we are alarmed that civilians continue to account for the majority of casualties in conflict and by the historically high numbers of displaced persons. As a key humanitarian donor worldwide, the European Union (EU) is deeply concerned by the frequency and gravity of attacks against humanitarian personnel, as well as by problems of safe and timely humanitarian access, particularly for vulnerable groups. We share the concern about the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons, particularly when used in densely populated areas, and we note the growing recognition of the indiscriminate harm they can cause. The suffering of hundreds of thousands of civilians in the midst of conflict requires our rigorous attention, strengthened resolve and decisive action.

The European Union commends the work conducted within the United Nations on the protection of civilians and the increased attention paid by the Security Council to those issues. Resolution 1894 (2009) of last November has been rightly hailed as a landmark development. We also wish to recall important resolutions related to women and peace and security and to children in armed conflict, and the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The European Union fully supports the Secretary General's call to address protection-of-civilians situations in a comprehensive way, to undertake further action to address the five core challenges, and to improve the coherence and mainstreaming of protection. We support the systematic use of practical tools, such as the aide-memoire of 2002, which has now been updated. We commend the work of the informal Expert Group on the Protection of Civilians. Like many speakers today, we believe that the systematic monitoring of and reporting on the protection of civilians in armed conflict is highly important and that indicators could play a very useful role in that regard. We also support the use of clear benchmarks for peacekeeping missions, in particular when it comes to their drawdown.

The European Union is grateful for the strong call to improve accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law in situations of armed conflict, including for the deliberate targeting of civilians and their use as human shields, indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, and delays or denials of humanitarian access. Together with targeted measures, accountability would help to improve compliance. We encourage the Council to further explore the Secretary-General's recommendations, including referrals to the International Criminal Court, support to national-level investigation and prosecution, and increased use of commissions of inquiry or fact-finding missions. We believe that such measures would also help to contribute to prevention, which has recently also been debated in the context of the responsibility to protect.

Moreover, we welcome the initiative of the current Security Council presidency to invite Under Secretary-General Pascoe for a horizon-scanning briefing at the beginning of the month. We encourage incoming presidencies to do likewise. Obviously, United Nations peacekeeping and other operations have a significant impact on enhancing protection on the ground. In view of that, the comprehensive contribution on the protection of civilians by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in its 2010 session was a significant achievement. We welcome the development of designated protection-of-civilians strategies by certain United Nations peacekeeping missions and encourage the engagement by senior mission leadership with protection issues. We look forward to a more consistent and systemic consideration of such issues in reports of the Secretary-General as guidelines are under development.

We also welcome the fact that the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) carries work forward on a strategic framework for mission-wide protection and training modules, as well as for an assessment of resources and capabilities, which will help to improve the situation of civilians in armed conflict and to develop a culture of protection. Lastly, I would like to mention that the European Union has reviewed its own guidelines in this area. On 25 October, EU Foreign Ministers adopted revised guidelines on the protection of civilians in EU Common Security and Defence Policy missions and operations. They were developed in consultation with the United Nations, notably, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and DPKO, as well as the International Committee of the Red Cross. The document provides practical guidance for planning, conduct and subsequent lessons-learned processes of our missions. In the future as well the European Union will cooperate closely with the United Nations and other relevant organizations. The President: I will now give the floor to the representative of Germany.