

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

Statement by His Excellency Mr. Hasan Kleib, Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

Mr. President, let me begin by joining previous speakers in extending our appreciation to you for convening this open debate. We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/579). We are also grateful to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Director General of the International Committee of the Red Cross for their respective briefings. My delegation associates itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Notwithstanding the pronounced focus on the issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflicts over the past decade, the deplorable fact remains: civilians continue to fall victim to violence. Persistent violations occur that include deliberate targeting of civilians, the indiscriminate and excessive use of force, sexual and gender-based violence, and attacks against relief workers and humanitarian aid convoys, all in violation of international law, human rights law and refugee law.

However, we States Members of the United Nations are adamant about respecting and promoting the core principles of the Organization. Human life and human dignity must be at the forefront of our consideration, be that in time of peace or, more importantly, in time of war. That is the core goal of the United Nations. That objective has led us to evoke and build an elaborate architecture for the protection of civilians. That in turn has laid the foundation for the further proliferation of initiatives and measures at the regional and global level. Allow me to express three points on the Secretary-General's first report to stem from resolution 1894 (2009). First, the Council's framework requires a comprehensive approach that embodies the three pillars of the United Nations, namely, human rights, development and security. The report makes a strong case for the link among human rights, humanitarian relief and security efforts. However, there is little mention of development efforts in the report. We can argue that development is not within the purview of the Council. For that matter, neither are human rights and humanitarian issues. They are not, strictly speaking, within the Security Council's mandate. Thus, because we wish to see consistency in the application of the three pillars mentioned earlier, we hope that the next report will also highlight the development aspect. We Members of the United Nations must have a complete picture of the situation on the ground.

Capacity-building to resolve and deter possible conflicts is an important part of the normative framework to protect civilians. For that reason, we support the report's recommendation to increase funding for humanitarian and development actors in the context of the drawdown of United Nations peacekeeping and other relevant operations. Secondly, peacekeepers need to be provided with the resources required to fulfil their mandated tasks. The United Nations should provide a well-defined benchmark for the ratio of peacekeepers to civilians in the assigned areas of deployment. And there is a need to provide peacekeeping missions with appropriate guidelines on the protection of civilians.

We need to continue this dialogue across regions. In line with paragraph 34 of resolution 1894 (2009), on consultation and cooperation across the regions, we recently collaborated with the Government of Norway to organize a regional workshop in Jakarta on international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians. It was the first of a series of regional workshops, with two others planned for 2011, one in Africa and the other in Latin America. The goal was to enhance understanding of the application of international humanitarian law in light of the contemporary challenges we face.

Thirdly, the Geneva Conventions are the underpinnings of international humanitarian law. The report alludes to cases where humanitarian relief work is impeded, which has led to mounting demands that Member States be made accountable. We note that approach, but accountability will fail to bear fruit unless Member States have the capacity to deliver on their responsibilities. Such capacity can be delivered through international cooperation. That is the logic of cooperation and accountability.

States that have capacity must be held accountable. The report clearly describes that Israel has not fully lifted its so-called bureaucratic restrictions that continue to impede the implementation of a humanitarian response

commensurate with the existing humanitarian need. Israel has the capacity to fulfil its international obligations, and therefore Israel must be held accountable.

We value the Security Council's continued efforts to protect civilians in situations of armed conflict in a way consistent with its Charter-mandated responsibilities. We believe that while the best protection from armed conflict is found in the prevention and resolution of conflict, in the absence of peace we must remain vigilant as to the impact of conflict on the civilian population. We must do our best to protect civilians and minimize human suffering and death. Having said that, let me conclude by stressing that Indonesia values human rights, we value security and we value development. That triangle of goals must be preserved and promoted so that we can unremittently honour civilians in armed conflict.