

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

Statement by Mr. Rakhmetullin, Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations

At the outset, I would like to commend Lithuania for having convened this open debate on the important theme of the protection of civilians, as well as the speakers who have briefed us on the issues and challenges encountered in the protection of civilians. I would also like to acknowledge the outstanding work of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and of the peacekeepers who risk their lives for the cause of peace and security.

I will confine my comments to Kazakhstan's experiences of deployment in Iraq and other interventions, as well as our future deployment in the coming months to the missions in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, Western Sahara and Haiti.

While it is clear that the maintenance of peace and the protection of civilians is the joint responsibility and task of the Security Council, DPKO, the Department of Field Support, troop- and police-contributing countries, peacekeepers themselves on the ground and, most important, the host Government, it is often found that adequate cooperation and operational clarity on the implementation of mandates have not always been possible. That is due to the differing perceptions and geopolitical standpoints of members of the Security Council, the parties involved in the conflict and the players on the ground. There is therefore an imperative need for a clear understanding, interpretation and implementation of resolution 1894 (2009) through greater cohesion among mandates, intentions and expectations, especially if civilian protection requires the use of force.

Recently, the multifaceted nature of present-day peacekeeping operations, with political, military, human rights and humanitarian components and mandates and operating under the aegis of a single United Nations mission, is a welcome development and leads to positive synergies and ease in decision-making on enhancing the protection of civilians. On the other hand, we run the risk of blurring roles and responsibilities, especially between humanitarian work, judicial investigation and the provision of security through an armed presence, all of which require our attention as we move forward.

We are pleased to note the efforts of DPKO, which, together with the International Committee of the Red Cross, humanitarian aid agencies and the countries contributing troops and police personnel, in preparing a conceptual framework to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the various components of a mission. Moreover, when United Nations forces are drawn into an armed conflict, it is obvious that international humanitarian law should govern military operations, to which all parties to the armed conflict, including United Nations forces, should adhere.

Civilian protection is complex and requires multidimensional provisions and different competencies and skills for each vulnerable group: women and children subject to horrific atrocities; child soldiers; survivors displaced by force or, for lack of choice, taking refuge in camps where they are often defenceless against armed attacks and harassment; victims maimed by mines and other indiscriminate munitions; and those dying of the indirect effects of armed conflict, such as disease, malnutrition and famine. Each mission therefore must bring together many different actors over time, from planning to execution, including the active participation of women at each stage of the process.

Maintaining relations with host countries is a critical issue, particularly in situations where the host Government bans peacekeepers from entering the country or decides to expel peacekeepers before they have completed their mandates, thus jeopardizing the safety of the civilian population.

My delegation recalls with great appreciation the operational innovations in a number of missions, such as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite the limited resources and hazardous security environments. Those operations have increasingly used and developed mobile operational bases, quick-response units and early-warning

systems to anticipate, prevent or deter violence against civilians or to rapidly intervene to stop it. Such examples are worthy of replication.

The issues of mission size, troop strength, adequate resources and equipment, especially for remote areas, the expertise of personnel and their commitment and cooperation among the parties are factors that lend credibility to any mission — the greater their extent, the greater the effectiveness to protect civilians against armed attacks by Government forces or rebels. States Members of the United Nations are therefore urged to make larger contributions and to provide capacity-building and technical assistance for peacekeeping operations and to enable the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office to fully discharge their functions.

Kazakhstan, in bidding for a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for the period 2017 to 2018, is committed to working with the international community in supporting and strengthening the capacity of DPKO and the Security Council to fulfil their peace and security mandates.