

**Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians During Armed Conflict**  
**Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, Security Council Chamber (GA-TSC-01)**

***Statement by H.E. Mr. Mark Lyall Grant, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations and current President of the Security Council***

I now wish to make a statement in my capacity as representative of the United Kingdom. I join others in thanking all the briefers today.

The United Kingdom believes that the protection of civilians should remain at the forefront of the Security Council's work. We know from experience why that needs to be the case.

In the Sudan, civilian protection is central to peacekeeping missions, particularly in Darfur, where more than 10 per cent of the population is living in camps. As the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator said, the continued poor security situation in parts of Darfur causes great suffering to the civilian population and impairs the ability of humanitarian agencies to provide essential assistance.

In Burma, we remain deeply concerned about the lack of progress towards national reconciliation and the implications for civilians living in ethnic minority areas and the border regions. In many of those areas, civilians continue to be targeted by the military. We remain very troubled by reports of indiscriminate attacks on vulnerable people, including women and children. Reports also document that many have had their land confiscated and their homes destroyed and have been forcibly relocated. The United Kingdom urges the Burmese regime to undertake meaningful dialogue with ethnic groups to maximize the opportunities presented by the election for national reconciliation.

Recent mass rapes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo highlight the urgent need for enhanced civilian protection in the east of the country. The primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, as in other host Governments, rests with the Democratic Republic of the Congo authorities. However, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo plays an essential role in supporting the authorities where they lack the capacity to provide such protection.

Today, we are pleased that the presidential statement (S/PRST/2010/25) recognizes the valuable role of the informal expert working group on protection of civilians and endorses the updated aide memoire.

The protection of civilians debates are biannual and, unfortunately, I have to note again the lack of progress on issues of humanitarian access. The United Kingdom particularly deplores and condemns violent attacks on humanitarian workers by parties to the conflicts. We call on States and other parties to ensure that all affected civilians have access to humanitarian aid according to need and without discrimination. We need to see progress on that point before the next debate on this important issue. I now resume my functions as President of the Council. I give the floor to the representative of Italy.