



# *Malaysia*

*Permanent Mission to the United Nations*

**STATEMENT BY**

**H.E. AMBASSADOR RASTAM MOHD ISA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT**

**THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY  
COUNCIL OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**CONCERNING**

**“PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT”**

**ON**

**MONDAY, 14 JUNE 2004**

Please check against delivery

Mr. President,

My delegation joins others in congratulating you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for this month. We also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, the distinguished Permanent Representative of Pakistan, for his stewardship of the Council last month.

2. I wish to thank you, Mr. President, and members of the Council, for convening this public debate on the important issue of "Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict." I also thank and congratulate the Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland for presenting the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which examines the issues outlined in earlier reports and resolutions of the Council. In this regard, my delegation is encouraged by the report that has identified specific ways in which performance in the protection of civilians can be further improved. This examination will induce further discussions that should assist the Council and the other principal organs of the United Nations, the General Assembly and ECOSOC, in coming to a common consensus in addressing the issues at hand.

Mr. President,

3. The alarming increase in the number of civilians caught up in armed conflicts is cause for concern to the international community. Civilians have been displaced and struggling to survive in harsh conditions. Many have been killed or subjected to extreme human rights violations, including rape and sexual violence. In Iraq, the increasingly serious threats to security and continued fighting have resulted in more civilian deaths and injuries. Civilian detainees have been subjected to torture and other serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. The continued deterioration of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, as a result of escalating violence and military attacks as well the blatant disregard of international law by Israel has caused civilian deaths and sufferings.

4. In these conflicts women, children, the aged and infirm continue to be the vulnerable groups. They constitute some 90 per cent of conflict casualties around the world. This is a deplorable development and such inhumane acts committed against these groups are unacceptable and must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. The perpetrators of these criminal and cruel acts must be brought to justice to arrest the culture of impunity that is so pervasive in so many areas of armed conflict around the world.

Mr. President,

5. My delegation believes that the protection of civilians in armed conflict should be all encompassing. The affected civilians should not only be assured of their physical security in situations of armed conflict but also be provided with legal protection under international law. This point has been underscored by the Secretary-General in his report. There are in existence a number of international instruments and conventions that provide the legal basis

for the protection of civilians. It is important that the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity be made accountable for their actions and will face the full penalty of the law even after the conflict is over. The international community must collectively demonstrate its resolve to punish those responsible.

6. My delegation reiterates its condemnation of the direct attacks on United Nations staff and other humanitarian personnel in Iraq, particularly the bombings of the United Nations and ICRC headquarters in Baghdad on 19 August and 27 October 2003 respectively. The killing of 27 United Nations staff members and the assault on more than 426 others mark a disturbing trend of disregard for humanitarian principles and deliberate targeting of humanitarian workers for political or tactical purposes. The perpetrators of such attacks must be held accountable, as affirmed in Council resolution 1502 (2003) of 26 August 2003.

Mr. President,

7. My delegation is concerned over the continuing obstructions placed against humanitarian access for people in need of food, water, shelter and medical care in conflict situations. The statistics is far from encouraging in Africa and elsewhere. In the occupied Palestinian Territory, humanitarian assistance for 3.5 million civilians have been severely affected following the construction of the Wall by Israel, which has had a profound humanitarian impact on civilians by separating Palestinian communities from their jobs and markets and severely limiting their access to food, water and power supplies and essential social services, including schools and hospitals. I urge the Council to take effective measures to protect the Palestinian civilians who have long suffered under harsh and brutal Israeli occupation. The Council has to agree that the protection of the Palestinian civilians forms the very essence of the question addressed by the Council today, given its long standing nature.

Mr. President,

8. The protection of civilians in armed conflicts requires a comprehensive approach on the part of international community, including through regional approaches. It also requires coordinated and concerted efforts on the part of all concerned – the parties in conflict, the peacekeepers, the United Nations humanitarian workers, and personnel of other international relief agencies and non-governmental organizations. They are indispensable partners in the field. While performing its own specialized duties, each plays a supportive and reinforcing role in ensuring the physical, legal and psychological protection and well-being of the hapless civilians caught in the trauma of armed conflict.

Mr. President,

9. The observations made by the Secretary-General in his report must be seriously attended to in order to strengthen the mechanisms already agreed in the past by the Council in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Malaysia fully supports the emphasis on

reaffirming the commitment to the principles of international law based on justice, peaceful settlement of disputes and respect for human dignity.

Thank you, Mr. President.