



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMB. HUSSEIN HANIFF
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON
“PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT”**

WEDNESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2011

Mr. President,

At the outset, allow me to join others in congratulating you as President of the Security Council for the month of November, and wish you well in that task. I also wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the High Commissioner for Human Rights for their presentations.

2. Malaysia is pleased with the Council's decision to make this meeting an open debate, which would allow for the participation of the general membership of the Organisation, thereby contributing further to the openness and transparency in the work of the Council to which Portugal and others are also strongly committed. My delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement delivered by Egypt on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. President,

3. Since our last open debate on this topic in May this year, the Council had established the United Nations Organization Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), as well as United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), where both peacekeeping missions had mandates on protection of civilians. The presence of Malaysian peacekeepers in UNMISS underlines Malaysia's firm commitment and belief that the United Nations peacekeeping operations are an indispensable instrument which has contributed immensely to the resolutions of many armed conflicts. However, this instrument must be wielded with great care.

4. While my delegation recognizes the efforts by the Council to prevent the unnecessary loss of innocent lives, we reiterate that the responsibility to protect civilians lies with the host governments of peacekeeping missions, and in this regard such missions with a civilian-protection mandate should conduct their tasks without prejudice to this responsibility. My delegation also wishes to stress the importance of impartiality as a guiding principle for UN peacekeepers mandated to protect civilians.

5. Malaysia is of the view that successful protection of civilians by UN peacekeeping missions requires a more comprehensive and holistic approach, incorporating the provisions of resources, support and training. This should be complemented with the requisite key enablers such as strong

coordinating mechanisms and an effective flow of information. We believe that such an approach would bridge some of the existing gaps in implementing civilian-protection mandates.

Mr. President,

6. One aspect of protection of civilians which my delegation particularly feels has not been given adequate attention is the protection of journalists and media professionals. Resolution 1738 (2006) and Resolution 1910 (2010) attempted to provide protection for journalists, in the general context as well as in Somalia respectively. Unfortunately this is too little too late, and I regret to inform that a Malaysian journalist was killed recently while in Somalia to report on a humanitarian aid mission. In this regard, my delegation is of the view that the Council should explore the possibility of strengthening provisions to ensure the safety of journalists, within the framework of protection of civilians.

7. On our part, Malaysia reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that our peacekeepers are trained to the best of their ability to face the multitude of challenges which are prevalent in UN peacekeeping operations. Our Peacekeeping Training Centre last week jointly organised a course with UNDP entitled "Promoting Peace through Mainstreaming Gender in Peacekeeping Operations", which I am pleased to note included protection of civilians as part of its syllabus. We will continue to enhance the quality of training for Malaysians as well as foreign participants, based on UN best practices as well as the 51 years of experience our country has in participating in UN peacekeeping missions.

Mr. President,

8. Finally, allow me also to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the work of our valiant UN peacekeepers who are at risk of making the ultimate sacrifice while serving to protect civilians in conflict zones. It is only appropriate that the Council deliberates this topic with the utmost care that it deserves, given the dangers that our blue helmets face while carrying out their mandates.

I thank you, Mr. President.