



# Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

*(Please check against delivery)*

**STATEMENT BY  
H. E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
AT THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON  
PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT:  
PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS  
NEW YORK, 17 JULY 2013**

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Mde. President,

On the outset, I would like to express my sincere congratulations to the United States, on assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for this month.

2. I wish to thank Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations for his statement. I would also like to extend my thanks to Mr. Richard Engel, Ms. Kathleen Carrol, Mr. Mustafa Haji Abdinur and Ghaith Abdul-Ahad for their statements that have updated the Council on this important issue.

Mde. President,

3. My delegation welcome the timely convening of this open debate. We are particularly alarmed that in 2012 alone, 121 journalists were killed and hundreds of others more targeted and imprisoned. In fact, Malaysia too lost a journalist in Somalia last year. We are also concern over reports that journalists are being targeted and killed while covering events in Gaza during Israel's attacks last November 2012 under Operation Pillar Defense as testified recently to the UN Special Committee to investigate Israeli Practice affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and other Arabs of the Occupied Territories. In 2012, 147 violations were reported against journalists.

4. Journalists are civilians and must be protected in times of conflict in accordance with international law. My delegation also agrees that the perpetrators of violence against journalists in conflict situations, such as through kidnappings, torture and murder, must be held accountable and be brought to justice. There can be no impunity whatsoever.

Mde. President,

5. While recognizing the need to enhance protection for journalists, we must also recognize that journalists are unique. Their uniqueness stems from the nature of their job, which is to report on a particular situation. More often than not, the greater the risk, the higher the demand for the journalist to report on what is taking place on the ground. In general, we can say that the job of a journalist often finds the person in precarious situations. The more danger he or she puts in, the more credible the story would be. Because of this, the protection of journalists presents a greater challenge as opposed to protecting other civilians.

Mde. President,

6. Malaysia believes that the main responsibility to protect journalists lie with the State. States are responsible to ensure the safety and should accord protection to the fullest extent of the law for journalists in the conflict areas. In this regard, my delegation calls for the strict adherence to UN Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006) and 1894 (2009) as well as relevant international law, including humanitarian and human rights laws, in the protection of civilians.

7. While the primary responsibility to protect journalists lie with the State, the media industry must also be partly responsible for the journalists' well-being. Being responsible for sending them to conflict areas, the media industry should provide journalists with necessary preparation. Journalists should be given proper briefing and adequate information regarding the security situation in a conflict area. They must also be wary of the dangers they will surely face and situations that they would likely encounter. Due to the risks taken by journalists, the media industry could also allocate sufficient provisions and services to better protect them. They could be given greater protection with the creation of social safety nets and life insurance.

Mde. President,

8. While we would like to place the responsibility on others, we cannot assume that journalists are passive actors whose fate fully rests in the hands of other actors. In fact, journalists themselves must be responsible for their own safety and security. Article 79, sub-paragraph 2, of the Additional Protocol I of the Geneva Convention, clearly stipulates that journalists are protected provided that they take no action that adversely affects their status as civilians. This is something that journalists must constantly abide. In the confusing scenario that exists in conflict areas where killings and chaos are widespread, journalists are not easily distinguishable. Thus, they must avoid putting themselves in such a situation.

Mde. President,

9. My delegation shares the views reflected in the *UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity 2012* as prepared by the United Nations

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). We are appalled with the findings that there is an increasing trend of targeted killing of journalists worldwide. We condemn the acts of violence which have cost the lives of 372 journalists between 2006 to 2011. Again, Malaysia believes that impunity must end and the acts of violence committed against civilians, including journalists must cease. My delegation agrees that the United Nations has an important role to play in combating impunity as reflected in the UN Plan of Action. Such measures would include enhancing coordination between UN agencies on the ground in addressing the issue of the safety of journalists.

Mde. President,

10. The advancement of information and communications technology could play an important part in improving protection for journalists. We are now accustomed to live visual feeds, connected via satellite links from conflict areas, which brings home important developments across the globe. This same technology may greatly enhance the safety and security of journalists as it would allow them to report on the situation on the ground without actually being close to the conflict zone.

Mde. President,

11. To conclude, Malaysia neither dispute nor question the important role of journalists in the dissemination of information in armed conflicts. The protection of journalists requires the involvement of States, the media industry, and a better understanding of the role of the journalist. Journalists are a vital tool in supporting the intellectual growth of societies, the development of political consciousness and economic progress. Malaysia holds firmly the relevance of UN Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006) and 1894 (2009) in the protection of civilians, including journalists. We also call on Member States to uphold the highest standards of adherence to international law, including humanitarian and human rights law to protect journalists.

I thank you, Mde. President.