



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

(Please check against delivery)

**STATEMENT BY
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CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON
THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT
UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS,
NEW YORK, 19 AUGUST 2013**

Madam President,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you and Argentina on your Presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to H.E. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General, for his views regarding the situation at hand. I wish to also thank Ms. Navi Pillay, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and Mr. Philip Spoerri from the International Committee of the Red Cross for their statements and insights as well.

2. Since our last debate in February, the situation regarding the protection of civilians in armed conflict has shown no signs of improvement. In fact, it has worsened. The death toll of civilians in various armed conflicts around the world continues to rise at a rate that leaves Malaysia deeply concerned. The Secretary General's report, S/2012/376, testifies to this. At the same time, the report also reminds us on the need for us to work together to improve the status-quo. Due to this, we welcome the convening of this debate, which would allow all of us to have a greater understanding of the various aspects of protecting civilians in armed conflict and to take the next steps forward.

Madam President,

3. Civilians in armed conflict should be accorded the necessary protection from being targeted indiscriminately. In this regard, all parties to an armed conflict should do their level best to distinguish civilians from combatants. While my delegation realizes that a distinction is not always easily made, an effort must be made to stop the unnecessary deaths among civilians. We understand that States bear the primary responsibility to protect civilians. Nevertheless, other parties such as non-State armed groups must also be obligated to ensure the safety of civilians, in accordance with international humanitarian and human right laws.

4. We are of the view that more work needs to be done to support awareness and compliance of parties in conflict. In this regard, Malaysia appreciates that many UN peacekeeping operations have emphasized, on case-by-case basis, a civilian protection mandate. My delegation is of the view that a protection mandate would play an important role in educating and exposing various stakeholders of the importance of protecting civilians.

Madam President,

5. The Secretary General in his report also highlighted the need for all parties to ensure greater access for humanitarian relief to reach the vulnerable people who are caught in conflict. My delegation certainly shares this view. We also call on parties in conflict to accord the necessary protection to humanitarian workers in areas of armed conflict.

6. Malaysia acknowledges that an integral part of ensuring compliance by parties in conflict is accountability. On this, impunity cannot and must not be tolerated. Those who target civilians and population centers must be made to realize that they have violated international law and, as such, must be held responsible and accountable for their actions. They must be brought to justice.

Madam President,

7. While we welcome political developments taking place in the Middle East Peace Process, the condition of civilians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory leaves much to be desired. Innocent Palestinians continue to suffer under the clutches of Israeli occupation. As the occupying power, Israel has demonstrated its ignorance to the various articles of the Geneva Conventions and international law.

8. In its recent visit to the Middle East, the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs underscored that Israel has continued to abuse detained Palestinian children. Israel has also continued to demolish Palestinian homes in blatant violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilians, including the protection of civilian objects. Needless to say, the condition of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Territory continues to remain in a sorry state. Worse still is the situation in the Gaza Strip. The Israeli blockade of Gaza has continued to strangle the very livelihood of the people. Madam President, if we are serious in protecting civilians, the international community should act to bring an end to this illegal occupation.

Madam President,

9. Malaysia is also appalled at the number of civilian casualties as a result of the Syrian conflict. There must be an immediate end to the senseless killings and appalling human rights violations, especially against civilians. We are deeply concerned over the

deteriorating humanitarian situation including the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

10. My delegation also calls on other parties to the conflict to restrict themselves from employing heavy weapons and explosive munitions that have been known to inflict untold misery, deaths and injuries to civilians. As with the authorities, the parties should also attend to the needs of the civilians and allow vital humanitarian access to reach them. My delegation believes that the opportunity for a political solution led by the Syrian people still exists and remains our only option to put an end to the conflict.

Madam President,

11. The issue of protecting civilians in armed conflict is a multifaceted challenge. While States remain obligated to protect civilians from harm and the atrocities of conflict, other stakeholders too must do their utmost in ensuring compliance and adhering to international humanitarian and human rights laws. Malaysia upholds the importance of UN Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006), 1894 (2009) and 1910 (2010) in ensuring that civilians are protected during armed conflicts. Rest assured, Madam President, we will continue to do our part in this regard.

I thank you.