



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



CANDIDATE
to the
UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL
for the term 2015-2016

(Please check against delivery)

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON
“PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT”
NEW YORK, 12 FEBRUARY 2014**

Madam President,

At the outset I wish to congratulate you and Lithuania on assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of February 2014. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Valerie Amos, Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Navi Pillay, High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. Herve Ladsous, Undersecretary-General for Peacekeeping and Mr. Yves Daccord, Director General of the International Committee of Red Cross for the briefings that they have given to the Security Council today.

2. I wish to thank Lithuania for preparing the concept note on ‘Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict’ which is the basis of today’s debate. My delegation also takes note of the Secretary General’s report as contained in report S/2013/689 which highlights developments on the issue of protection of civilians in armed conflict. We wish to present several pertinent points on this important theme, with the aim of improving our efforts to protect civilians in armed conflict.

Madam President,

3. The United Nations peacekeeping missions embody the most noble of our collective security responsibilities. Whether the peacekeepers are Caucasians, Africans, Asians or Arabs, we are all united in our common cause to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security. However, while nine peacekeeping operations are currently deployed with mandates on protection of civilians, the latest report by the Secretary General indicates that the current state of the protection of civilians ‘leaves little room for optimism’.

Madam President,

4. My delegation is wary that the practice of protection of civilians in the field may not be able to catch up with how the international community envisions taking this process forward. Our expectations are unreachable while our efforts remain rudimentary. We feel that there is a need to take stock of the lessons learned, given the lack of successes in establishing an effective protection of civilians’ regime.

5. Malaysia is all too aware of the complexity in protecting civilians in conflict areas. Special Representatives of the Secretary General and Force Commanders of UN Missions are facing intricate and unique challenges. Nevertheless, Malaysia sees the protection of civilians as a fundamental component of peacekeeping operations. In this regard, my delegation wishes to underscore the proposal by the Secretary General in his report, on the recommendation of a mechanism to record and track civilian casualties. Such a mechanism not only warrants our attention due to the need to protect civilians from harm, but it can also be an instrument to guide UN missions in taking pro-active and preventive measures to reduce the number of civilian casualties in conflict areas.

6. As the Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security, it should also be kept abreast with the latest developments in the field. We believe more efforts should be made by the leadership of UN peacekeeping missions to brief the Council in a more timely and frequent manner. This would enable for a continued engagement between the Council and the field on developments, progress and prioritization in the implementation of the mandate on protection of civilians.

Madam President,

7. My delegation also sees the merit of proper policy planning and preparedness of peacekeeping missions. When undertaking a protection of civilians' mandate, peacekeeping missions must consider implementing this in an integrated approach. Both military and police units, along with other UN agencies, cannot work in silos.

8. An integrated approach in peacekeeping would need to be balanced between instilling peace and security while seeding economic growth and development in the host country. The Council, in collaboration with Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), should capitalise the synergy of these two important mechanisms that have important roles in instituting good governance and economic growth.

9. We also believe that there must be effective coordination, which provides the platform for interaction and sharing of information, based on expertise and priorities set by the Security Council. In this regard, Malaysia welcomes the formulation of a comprehensive protection strategy in implementing civilian protection mandates by four UN peacekeeping missions. We are equally pleased to note that the Office of Military Advisor (OMA) is also finalising the drafting of baseline guidance on protection of civilians. We believe that these developments would improve inter-agency coordination and communications, as well as eliminate any gaps in carrying out protection mandates.

Madam President,

10. Training is the cornerstone in ensuring the standardization on the work of peacekeeping missions in protecting civilians. Peacekeepers and civilian personnel must be trained through a common module on protection of civilians prior to deployment. We believe efforts should also be made to include substantial elements on religion and cultural sensitivities of local people in the common training module for UN peacekeepers. The significance of respecting cultural

sensitivities and its impact on relations between peacekeepers and the local community must not be underestimated.

11. Giving due importance to training and exposure, the Government of Malaysia and with the support of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, hosted a training course on Protection of Civilians at the Malaysian Peacekeeping Training Center in Port Dickson, from 9 to 13 September 2013. Malaysia expresses its appreciation to the UN Mobile Training Team which was tasked to conduct the module for 26 international and Malaysian military officers. The training module included mission-specific scenarios based on incidents faced during UN missions. We believe that such training can benefit the host country and peacekeepers alike.

12. Indeed, these experiences accumulated by different UN missions are unique and often are the result of 'custom tailoring' when implementing mandates. These experiences should be shared with Member States and other UN missions. My delegation believes that these exchanges of experiences can be carried out through the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Peacebuilding Commission. We further believe that such measures would improve awareness and generate a common understanding of protection of civilians' mandates.

Madam President,

13. Malaysia has our fair share of experiences and best practices when it comes to protecting civilians. During our formative years, we confronted tremendous security challenges which we have had to learn through the blood, sweat and tears of our people. In 1975, Malaysia formalized a community based early-warning-system known as 'Rukun Tetangga'. Through this system, information was shared between the people and the security authorities. Malaysians from all walks of life learnt how to work together in supporting the safety needs of their communities. Today, there are 6,390 areas where this community-based-system operates.

14. My delegation suggests that United Nations peacekeeping missions are well placed to also develop such a 'bottom-up' based system. We believe that such a mechanism could enhance a greater situational awareness between the people, the mission and the host government. Such a community-based-system could also play an important role in the creation of a national identity and social integration in a society torn by conflict.

Madam President,

15. To conclude, peacekeeping remains the only feasible instrument in protecting civilians who are caught in armed conflict. In order to improve the status of protecting civilians in conflict areas, we must ensure that peacekeeping remains an effective tool and diplomatic instrument. This requires the commitment, resources and coordination by leaders of peacekeeping missions, host governments and civilians in the field. My delegation would like to underscore the importance of the UN Security Council to act in unanimity to develop a framework which will ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We need to ensure that the United

Nations is always endowed with the necessary resources in order for it to implement protection of civilian mandates effectively.

I thank you, Madam President.