



The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kenya to  
the United Nations – New York  
Security Council - 2021-2022

## OPEN DEBATE

### WARS IN CITIES: PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN URBAN SETTINGS

TUESDAY 25 JANUARY 2022 (10AM)

STATEMENT BY AMB MARTIN KIMANI, PERMANENT  
REPRESENTATIVE

**Thank you, Mr. President, and welcome to New York**

I thank Secretary General Antonio Guterres, Mr. Peter Maurer, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Ms. Radhya al Mutawakel (CSO Briefer – Human Rights Defender from Yemen) for their briefings.

**Mr. President,**

This debate offers us the opportunity to reconsider the very reason for the existence of the United Nations and the Security Council so that we can ensure that it is fit for purpose to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

None of us was born during the founding of the United Nations. But we all carry in our mind's eye the searing images of the destruction of cities as emblematic of the 'untold sorrow to mankind' that forced the existence of our common enterprise into being.

We carry the indelible images of the siege of Leningrad by Nazi Germany that lasted almost 900 days with untold suffering and heroism by its residents. To this day, the culture of the British people is marked by the experiences of civilians running into their bomb shelters to the sound of wailing sirens warning of incoming bombs.

History will always recall the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that, for the first time in human history, literally vaporised civilians to send a terrifying signal to their leaders.

By 1945, many of the great cities of Europe and Asia lay in ruins, their residents mourning lost relatives and friends, scavenging for food, many in countries whose will to fight had been broken by the bombings. The attacks on the cities were deliberate.

They were meant to break the will of the states waging war by breaking the lives and hopes of civilians. Civilians continue to bear the brunt of conflict in urban areas as witnessed in fighting ISIS in MOSUL and in the Syrian conflict.

**Mr. President,**

This then leads us to wonder whether a war the equal of the last two great global conflicts is possible today, and whether the Security Council has the will to recognise its approach and act to prevent it.

We ask this question knowing that such a war will be an outlier and that our tools to predict it are extremely poor. What is needed is a system of state relations that lowers the incentives for such a confrontation.

We are in a period of surging rivalries, escalations of military spending, and provocative actions.

Some of the great powers involved in this rising geopolitical struggle are members of this Council, while others stand outside it.

Their confrontations frequently lead to sparking or worsening conflict situations in other parts of the world. Africa being one of those regions that has historically suffered the most from the proxy actions of great powers.

**Mr. President,**

The last two world wars have come as a surprise. The next one is likely to be the same if we do not undertake urgent Security Council reforms that bring balance to permanent membership and the veto.

If this famous table is to truly prevent major wars, then its membership must expand or change substantively.

Added to the fact that the majority of the situations before the Council today are in Africa, and that great power rivalries will be most keenly felt there, we call for fundamental reform.

Excellencies, we therefore call your attention to the Kampala Roadmap of the just-completed ministerial meeting of the AU Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government on the Reform of the Security Council.

International Peace and Security will benefit immensely from the implementation of the Common African Position as encapsulated in the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration.

Africa's goal is to be fully represented in a Security Council with the power to prevent and stop major war.

Mr. President, we have had decades without a World War, but we should not rest on such laurels to imagine that we will not one day be thought of disparagingly as similar to the hapless League of Nations that was unable to prevent world war.

**I thank you.**