

I now give the floor to the representative of Belgium.

Mr. Lambert (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union. We wish to offer a few additional comments to highlight Belgium's support with respect to this matter, which is one of great importance to us.

Belgium welcomes the Security Council's recent adoption of resolutions 1882 (2009), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), which in our view reflect increased political will to reduce the devastating impact of armed conflict on civilians. In that connection, Belgium thanks the Human Rights Council for its adoption in October of its resolution 12/5, on protecting the human rights of civilians in armed conflict.

Belgium believes that Security Council resolution 1894 (2009), adopted today, marks a significant step forward in a process the Council began 10 years ago when it added protection of civilians in armed conflict to its agenda.

Although over the past 10 years the United Nations has undeniably made real progress on the protection of civilians, civilians remain the principal victims of conflict. Hence, a great deal remains to be done. We therefore hope that today's resolution will make it possible to genuinely strengthen the protection-of-civilians portion of the mandates of peacekeeping operations and to implement those mandates on the ground. The study recently prepared by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is a useful tool for helping us reach that goal.

Belgium attaches great importance also to the safety, security and freedom of movement of humanitarian personnel. We were particularly pleased that that aspect of the protection of civilians was more fully reflected in today's resolution.

Another requirement in the sphere of the protection of civilians is the fight against impunity. That challenge must be taken up at both the national and the international levels. Here, Belgium stresses the fundamental role of the International Criminal Court.

Finally, I recall that Belgium attaches great importance to the principle of the responsibility to protect, for which the General Assembly has just reaffirmed its support and which is intended to protect civilians from the most serious crimes: genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.