

**Ms. Čolaković** (Bosnia and Herzegovina): I would like to begin by thanking the presidency for having convened this important debate. At the same time, since this is my last address to the Security Council this month, I wish to express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, and to the Turkish delegation for successfully leading this important body during this month. I am sure that your wisdom, guidance and diplomatic skills will serve as excellent examples to all of us.

This year, the agenda item on the protection of civilians in armed conflict marks the tenth anniversary of its consideration by the Security Council, to which Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches the utmost importance. Bosnia and Herzegovina associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/277) vividly describes how civilians continue to suffer the consequences of armed conflict and to be the target of attacks. In some cases women, children and unarmed men have become the primary target of attacks by parties to the conflict. An unfortunate characteristic of contemporary conflict is that civilian casualties often outnumber combatants killed on the battlefield. Bosnia and Herzegovina is deeply concerned by such attacks, especially those deliberately targeting humanitarian workers during their noble missions.

My delegation condemns all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law. Given its own painful experience, Bosnia and Herzegovina always recognizes the need for strict compliance with international humanitarian law. The international community must strengthen mechanisms to enhance compliance by State and non-State parties to armed conflict with international law, in particular based on provisions of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

As a State party, Bosnia and Herzegovina reiterates its commitment to the provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Court must be the real guardian of the provisions of international humanitarian law. In that regard, combating impunity is a factor in preventing the commission of such acts against civilians.

Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed the adoption of the text of the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the conference held in Dublin in May 2008. Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the Signing Conference of the Convention held on 3 December 2008 in Oslo. The Convention on Cluster Munitions will serve as an indispensable legal instrument to broadly contribute to the protection of civilians during armed conflict.

My country welcomes increased engagement by the Security Council on issues connected to the protection of civilians. In that regard, we would like to commend the Security Council on the adoption of presidential statement S/PRST/2009/1, at the last meeting on this agenda item, and the updated aide-memoire on the protection of civilians contained in its annex.

I am convinced that the aide-memoire, produced as a result of close cooperation between the Security Council and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, is an indispensable tool that will help peacekeeping missions to successfully carry out their mandates.

My delegation supports the work of the Security Council Group of Experts on the Protection of Civilians as a body that will contribute to the protection of civilians in armed conflict through its analyses. Bosnia and Herzegovina would like to reiterate once again the importance of the role of regional and subregional organizations in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and conflict prevention. Bearing in mind that the majority of conflicts today are non-international, a regional and subregional approach would lead to more workable and lasting solutions. We invite competent United Nations bodies and agencies to work closely with regional organizations in that regard.

Finally, the best way to reduce the consequences of armed conflict is the timely address of the root causes.