

## **Statement by Hungary on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict**

Wednesday, 11 November 2009

First, let me thank the Austrian presidency for organizing this debate to mark the tenth anniversary of the Security Council's work on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

The Republic of Hungary fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Sweden on behalf of the European Union, and strongly welcomes the resolution on the subject that was adopted today (resolution 1894 (2009)).

The fact that today's armed conflicts still continue to have a severe impact on civilians, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2009/277), indicates the enduring need for the Security Council and United Nations Member States to further strengthen the protection of civilians, enhance compliance with international humanitarian law and human rights law and promote accountability for violations thereof.

The primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians is undoubtedly that of the parties to an armed conflict. Nevertheless, peacekeeping operations also can, and must, make significant contributions to the safety and security of civilians in all circumstances. Ensuring the coherent, coordinated and effective implementation of mandated protection activities is a major challenge for United Nations peacekeeping that has to be addressed as a priority by all of us.

As part of the next steps in the New Horizon process, mission-specific protection strategies need to be developed, and peacekeepers need clear operational guidance based on reliable information gained through an effective reporting system. The protection and assistance needs of women, children and persons living with disabilities — including refugees and internally displaced persons, who constitute an especially vulnerable group in situations of armed conflict — have to be strengthened and specifically defined in protection mandates.

This year, we have witnessed an alarming rise in the frequency and gravity of attacks against humanitarian personnel which have had significant implications on humanitarian operations. It is extremely important for the success of those operations that all parties to armed conflict engage in the facilitation of safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to those in need.

The Republic of Hungary supports the comprehensive approach to preventing violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law, avoiding their recurrence and seeking sustainable peace and justice.

As regards possible preventive action in the case of serious violations of international humanitarian law and human rights law such as genocide and mass atrocities, recent research shows that the progression of events towards the actual commission of an international crime is gradual, and that the period from the initial threat to full genocide offers ample warning time for the international community to take preventive action. Hungary believes that the planned Budapest Centre for the International Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities, as a catalyst for information and early warnings from various sources, will serve as an indispensable research mechanism to process and transform this information

into relevant policy recommendations for the international community, thus obviating further threats to the security of civilians in armed conflicts.

Let me assure the Council once again of the engagement of the Republic of Hungary and its commitment to enhancing the protection of civilians.