

I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Dhruva Narayana Rangaswamy, Member of Parliament and member of the Indian delegation.

Mr. Rangaswamy (India): India would like to thank the Austrian Presidency for organizing this thematic debate on the protection of civilians. I am making a short statement in the interest of the economic use of time and a more detailed statement is being circulated.

The operational reasons behind the inability of the United Nations to fully translate the Security Council's intent to protect civilians on the ground have been spelled out with clarity and precision by the independent study commissioned by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). My delegation believes that the primary gap concerns resources. For example, 17,000 peacekeepers are simply inadequate for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). There is no way that this number of troops can provide meaningful support to national authorities in an area of responsibility the size of Western Europe.

We have learned that the presence and activities of high-quality troops acts as a significant and effective deterrent to those who wish to harm civilians. It stands to reason that an increase in the number of troops is the first requirement. It also stands to reason that troops require proper equipment and enablers. India is one of the leading providers of air assets to MONUC and can attest to the efficacy of air assets as enablers. It is somewhat surprising that the United Nations and the Security Council are unable to generate the required air assets.

I refer to the need for accountability mentioned in the concept paper circulated by the Austrian presidency (S/2009/567). My delegation believes that there should be accountability of those who mandate. Their responsibility does not end with the generation of mandates. They should be held accountable if unachievable mandates are generated for political expediency or if adequate resources are not made available.

The development of normative frameworks must also take into account the question of accountability. These frameworks must be accompanied by mechanisms to enforce those norms. The deficit in the willingness and ability to enforce will inevitably lead to an erosion of credibility. There must also be accountability for this.

The Security Council must make up its mind about what it means by protection of civilians. It must have clarity about who is to be protected and what constitutes a threat. It must also clarify what kind of response it expects and who is to respond. It must, for example, be able to differentiate between threats that require a military response and those that require a rule of law response. It should not ask force commanders or their soldiers to assume policing responsibilities. The Security Council must also be clear that its responsibility for protecting civilians does not end with a military or police response. Civilians require humanitarian wherewithal for survival. Protection of civilians requires a more integrated view. Multiple stakeholders are involved, not just the military.

The concept to be developed should be one that can be translated into targets on the ground. It must be able to quantify the problem and articulate actions that need to be taken. Only then will we be able to measure progress or the lack of it.

My delegation suspects that the Council will find it difficult to address this issue. Development of indicators and norms requires uniform application of the law. The Security Council cannot do justice to its role if it discusses protection of civilians in some operations and not in others.

The Council needs to develop a clearer idea of operational realities. This information gap cannot be addressed without meaningful and substantive consultations with troop- and police-contributing countries. Even though there is a relative lack of appreciation — on the part of the Council and many so-called humanitarian actors — of the troops' initiative and dedication to humanitarian principles, it is a fact that there is progress on the ground. Many contingents have ideas and concepts that can be effective. An effort by MONUC's Indian Brigade to distribute cell phone hotline numbers within their area of operation has led to a significant increase in reported incidents of violence and the consequent deployment of troops to pre-empt or deter attacks. This has also led to creation of databases of malefactors and their movement patterns.

That is an example of the kind of intelligence capabilities that are key requirements for increased effectiveness.

National capacities need to be strengthened. Peacekeepers cannot and should not protect everyone from everything. The protection of civilians is a national responsibility, and peacekeepers are there to aid in the development of these national capacities. Capacities and institutions must be relevant to the realities of the area in which United Nations operations are deployed. The experiences and capabilities of developing countries, particularly those that have gone through successful nation-building exercises, are of great significance in this regard. The Security Council must find ways and means to harness those capacities.