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STATEMENT BY
AMBASSADOR ALLAN ROCK
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA

TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT

NEW YORK, 28 JUNE 2006

DÉCLARATION DE
L'AMBASSADEUR ALLAN ROCK
REPRÉSENTANT PERMANENT DU CANADA
AUPRES DES NATIONS UNIES

DEVANT LE CONSEIL DE SECURITE DES NATIONS UNIES
CONCERNANT LA PROTECTION DES CIVILS LORS DE CONFLITS ARMÉS

NEW YORK, LE 28 JUIN 2006

On behalf of the Government of Canada, I would like to thank Denmark for convening this open debate, and the Emergency Relief Coordinator for his statement.

The protection of civilians is not an abstract political or legal concept. On any given day in DRC, Darfur, Cote d'Ivoire, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Haiti, or Northern Uganda, for those men, women and children in need of it, having protection can mean being able to venture beyond their settlement to collect firewood without fear of rape by armed militia; not needing to travel at night for miles to seek shelter to avoid forced recruitment; and maintaining their livelihood and property because they have not become displaced or dispossessed. It means those living in occupied territories will have their rights under international humanitarian law respected. And it means that civilians who may be shopping, praying or simply going about their business won't be the deliberate target of a terrorist attack.

The protection of civilians during and after armed conflict is achieved through a practical, tangible set of actions. While some of these actions can be provided by one's family and community, critically in so far as this Council is concerned, legal and physical protection must be ensured by one's State and supplemented by the international community as a whole.

The Security Council's direct role in the protection of civilians as part of its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security is now well established. In this Chamber, Council members have repeatedly pledged that they, and the wider international community, will take steps to improve civilian protection, as they did again in April with the passage of resolution 1674. The Government of Canada will continue to monitor the implementation by the Council of its commitments, including country specific contexts, and to support work that enhances Council and wider international efforts to respond appropriately when civilians may be at risk.

Mr. President,

Canada welcomes the Council's stated intention in resolution 1674 to give priority to civilian protection components in multidimensional peace operations, and its strong statements related to the need to address sexual and gender-based violence. We were pleased to see endorsement of the concept of the responsibility to protect.

We would like to ensure the Council maintains its strong support for humanitarian access, which has been a critical issue in Northern Uganda, Somalia and Darfur, and that it will consider appropriate actions when it is deliberately obstructed. In addition, consistent with resolution 1296, we believe that efforts in relation to the question of refugee and IDP camp security must not be limited only to existing peacekeeping operations. This issue is proving to be a key challenge in Chad, where the Council must consider concretely what can and should be done to address insecurity for the displaced in eastern Chad as it impacts on Darfur and vice versa.

While 1674 was a welcome resolution, efforts to advance the subject must continue. We would hope next steps by the Council will include the following:

- One: Be more proactive in responding to situations where civilians are at risk. This includes leaning forward to draw on good offices, envoys, monitoring

missions and preventive deployments to act as a deterrence, and paying due regard to the need to address insecurity in refugee and IDP camp contexts;

- Two: Support humanitarian and human rights agencies by promoting compliance with international law, and help create an enabling environment for them to work through strong and consistent Council resolutions and advocacy;
- Three: Continue to go to the field and directly raise civilian protection concerns. We welcome the emphasis placed by the Security Council mission to Sudan on the need for a robust UN mandate for Darfur to protect civilians in its discussions with the Government in Khartoum. We would also suggest joint mobilization in countries on which the Council is seized and where respective members have representation. This will help ensure the parties know it is not only in New York that attention is being paid to these issues;
- Four: Not tolerate impunity regarding the execution of its decisions – the Council should outline specific actions, with timelines and benchmarks for parties to a conflict and then monitor their implementation, ready to apply penalties when actions are not taken;
- Five: Maintain Council attentiveness to the strategic use of targeted sanctions to deter attacks in civilians, enforce and monitor such measures when employed, pursue would-be violators, and draw on expert panels as appropriate;
- Six: Continue to develop criteria to guide the use force where diplomatic efforts have not proven successful in preventing gross and systematic violations of human rights and humanitarian law;
- Seven: Until those criteria are adopted, continue to agree on the design and use of tailored and robust multidimensional mandates for civilian protection where a physical international presence is required, backed by the necessary means and capabilities, and follow-up on those mandates once they are adopted and missions are in the field. The December and May workshops on DRC and Cote d'Ivoire, which Canada was pleased to co-host, underscored the importance of periodically reviewing missions and refining them to maximize their impact. They also showed that clarity is needed within a UN integrated mission about what it means to have a protection of civilians' mandate, and how it can act as a unifying objective for the mission's activities.

Mr. President,

Key to the Council's success in acting early on threats to civilians is its access to good data on what is occurring on the ground. The UN Secretariat and agencies in the field have a crucial role to play in providing such evidence. Gathering it will be facilitated with the welcome creation of the new standing protection deployment mechanism (PROCAP) by OCHA, and by the completion in the coming months of a standardized civilian protection monitoring and reporting mechanism for use by country teams. Canada has been pleased to contribute to both.

Better information will also assist with mission planning, an area where continued improvements by the Secretariat are needed, and where cooperation between troop

contributing countries, the UN and regional organizations is key. These actors must also collaborate to ensure pre-deployment training for military and civilian police includes a specific focus on civilian protection where they will be responsible for such mandates, that there is common doctrine and inter-operability among TCC's to facilitate civilian protection efforts, and that missions have the resources to fulfil their protection tasks. We are hopeful that DPKO's Guidance Project will address these issues.

Mr. President,

States, including Security Council members, must demonstrate their willingness to ensure that populations at risk have access at all times to the greatest protection possible, that perpetrators of abuse will be held accountable for their actions, and that advocacy, monitoring, capacity building become the watch words for our efforts. The circumstances in which the protection of civilians must take place are complex and represent a formidable challenge to the UN and governments – but one that can and must be met. Words said in this Chamber alone will not make this agenda a reality. Instead, concrete steps and the willingness to make flexible and pragmatic use of all levers available to us will enable us to meet our responsibility to the vulnerable. The Security Council can count on Canada's support and encouragement as we work with you in responding to these difficult challenges.

Thank you Mr. President.