

DENMARK'S PRESIDENCY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL IN JUNE 2006

”Protection of civilians in armed conflict: Follow-up and implementation of Security Council resolution 1674 (2006)”

Discussion paper for the open debate on 28 June 2006

At the World Summit in September 2005, Heads of State and Government pledged to ensure the protection of civilians during and after armed conflicts in accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The United Nations plays a central role in the endeavours of the international community and its members to fulfil this responsibility.

The thematic issue of protection of civilians has been on the agenda of the Security Council since 1999. To date the debate has led to the adoption of three Security Council resolutions.¹ The Security Council took yet another important step in the establishment of a framework of protection with the adoption of resolution 1674 on 28 April 2006. But decisions need to be followed by action. The main challenge ahead is to produce real improvement on the ground. Efforts to protect civilians in situations of conflict must be more predictable, timely and systematic.

Following the established practice of the Security Council a semi-annual open debate on protection of civilians will take place on 28 June 2006. The thematic debate provides the Council and other interested member states with an opportunity to evaluate the progress achieved and in particular to provide recommendations on steps to be taken to ensure proper follow-up of resolution 1674.

During the debate the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Jan Egeland, will provide the Council with an updated overview on the current worldwide status of civilians in situations of armed conflict. Furthermore, Mr. Egeland will focus on possible practical measures, which would strengthen our ability to protect civilians.

To facilitate a frank exchange of views and ideas on the implementation of the protection framework - including which practical steps must be taken by Member States, the UN-System and other actors to improve the protection of civilians - some of the following issues could merit special attention:

- How do we establish realistic objectives for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts and make certain that local authorities, civil society and the international community share these objectives?
- What steps could be taken to improve coordination and cooperation among all relevant actors involved in the protection of civilians?
- How do we ensure that protection mandates are sufficiently clear and meet the specific needs of the situation on the ground?
- How do we facilitate humanitarian access and the safety of humanitarian actors?
- Which measures should be employed to ensure greater compliance with international humanitarian law and the resolutions of the Security Council on the protection of civilians?
- How do we improve the provision of relevant information, analysis and planning to allow for better response to situations on the ground by all actors?

¹ Ref.: Security Council Resolution 1265 of 17 September 1999, Security Council Resolution 1296 of 19 April 2000 and Security Council Resolution 1674 of 28 April 2006 on the protection of civilians in armed conflict