

**PERMANENT MISSION OF DENMARK
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Statement by
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United Nations Security Council

Open Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

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Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking the delegation of Qatar for convening this meeting on protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

I would also like to express our sincere gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Egeland, for his consistent and unyielding determination to assist the millions of innocent people who have been caught up by the negative consequences of armed conflict.

Futhermore, I would like to fully associate my delegation with the statement to be delivered later in the debate by the Permanent Representative of Finland on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

As clearly illustrated by the statement by Mr. Egeland, the efforts of the Security Council to maintain peace and security continues to come up short in the global perspective. It follows that the need to protect civilians affected by armed conflict is an ongoing imperative for the Council with no immediate end in sight.

For this reason we cannot continue to approach the question on an almost ad hoc basis. Populations in need must be able to depend on our will to come to their assistance and perpetrators must be assured that their crimes will not be left unpunished. Efforts to protect civilians in situations of conflict by this Council and by the international community as a whole must be more predictable, timely and systematic.

Mr. President,

A comprehensive framework for protection of civilians already exists in the large body of in particular international humanitarian law and the three main Security Council resolutions on the issue. The immediate attention of the Council should therefore be given to the implementation of the protection framework in order to produce real improvements on the ground.

Emphasis should be put on providing more comprehensive peacekeeping *inter alia* by incorporating the protection of civilians as a central element in the mandates for UN peacekeeping operations. Such mandates must be supported with the necessary capacity and practical support allowing the peacekeeping forces to properly address protection needs on the ground including taking firm action against sexual violence and providing protection to IDPs.

The protection of civilians is a multi-faceted challenge and so must be our response. We must put the relatively limited number of tools available to the Security Council to the best of their use. This includes increasing our capacity to monitor and report on violations against civilians – an effort which is successfully being spearheaded on the issue of children affected by armed conflicts. But it also includes referral of violators to international courts including the ICC and the use of targeted sanctions to deter attacks on civilians including humanitarian workers, NGO's and journalists. The Council must overcome its reluctance to fully use these tools if it seriously wish to progress the protection agenda.

Mr. President,

Each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. Unfortunately, in some cases States manifestly fails in providing the necessary protection -or the perpetrator is the State itself.

In situations where States embark on waging war against its own population the responsibility to protect the civilians affected becomes that of the international community. We have a moral and political obligation not to turn our backs to the many civilians which suffers under the attacks by or with the consent of their own governments.

Whether or not the concept of “responsibility to protect” needs further consideration is as such irrelevant. For lack of action and engagement elsewhere the basic political commitment not to allow another “Rwanda” or “Srebrenica” is the responsibility of all of us including the Security Council as well as other UN-bodies.

In this regard, Denmark welcomes the decision by the Human Rights Council to convene a special session on the “Human Rights Situation in Darfur”. It is high time that all actors engage in a comprehensive and constructive dialogue on this unacceptable situation which in turn must lead to prompt and decisive action to allviate the suffering of the people of Darfur.

Mr. President,

The reporting and distribution of news from areas entangled in conflict is often the only hope that the affected populations have of influencing national, regional and international actors to step in and address the situation. Consequently, Denmark is deeply concerned by the alarming increase in attacks on journalist in recent armed conflicts.

The continues targeting of journalists – in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law – is unacceptable and has now reach a level where the Security Council must express its clear condemnation of the situation. We hope that the initiative on this important issue presented by France, Greece, the UK, Slovakia and Denmark will find general support in the Security Council.

I thank you Mr. President.