

Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Hasan Kleib
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia
at the UN Security Council Open Debate on the Agenda Item:
“Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict”
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Mr. President,

Let me join other delegations in thanking Mr. John Holmes, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator for his briefing.

Mr. President,

Civilians have always been victim of warfare in the history of humankind. World War I had claimed about 9 million civilian deaths and World War II with its famine and disease that came along had caused about 47 million civilian casualties.

Today, the picture remains gloomy. Conflicts in Africa, the Middle East, the Balkans and other zones of war have claimed considerable number of civilian casualties.

Indonesia, therefore, believes that protection of civilians in armed conflict is an urgent matter. We also believe that existing measures to protect civilians must be strengthened and new measures must be sought.

We continue to highly regard legal measure in promoting the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We particularly attach great significance to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols.

In the light of the 30th commemoration of the Additional Protocols on 8 June 2007, my delegation reaffirms our support and commitment to those Protocols as well as the Geneva Conventions. We call all parties involved in armed conflicts to respect the protection of civilians and observe those Conventions and their Protocols.

As far as complying with the international humanitarian law is concerned, my delegation underlines that both armed state actors and armed non-state actors have equal responsibility in the protection of civilians and in the adherence of the law.

Compliance of humanitarian and human rights laws by armed state actors in general can be easily monitored through different existing modalities. As far as armed state actors are concerned, my delegation emphasizes the importance of educational measure in ensuring that armed personnel are aware of their human rights and humanitarian responsibility. In our view, human rights and humanitarian education and training for armed personnel will have a preventive advantage.

Challenges appear when it comes to non-state armed groups. My delegation recognizes the limit of state-centric international instruments in addressing the issue of protection *vis-à-vis* those groups. Accordingly, my delegation stresses the need for alternative measures to hold non-state combatants accountable when they violate human rights and humanitarian norms. In this regard, we welcome the role of ICRC and other humanitarian and human rights agencies in promoting awareness of the instruments among non-state combatants and in ensuring that they obey those instruments. We believe that the UN could also contribute to that endeavour.

Additionally, my delegation deplores civilian casualties caused by various military operations carried out under the banner of war against terrorism. Those casualties cannot simply be regarded as collateral damage. Indonesia, therefore, believes that all measures by any party must abide by the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the 1977 Additional Protocols as well as various international human rights instruments.

Mr. President,

When conflict is taking place, civilians have also become displaced. Under such a circumstance, their basic rights, including rights to food, are generally deprived. Many died of diseases or hunger. In that regard, we underline the critical importance of humanitarian assistance.

We continue to appreciate the value of humanitarianism in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. We continue to support the work of UNHCR and other humanitarian agencies. And, we commend donor countries for their contribution as well as the receiving countries for their generosity.

Indonesia is concerned over frequent incidents where convoys of humanitarian aids are ambushed or where access for humanitarian assistance is restricted so that the displaced civilians become out of reach. In our view, this tactic will only prolong the anguish of the displaced civilians, and thus we cannot let it happen.

We believe that it is the responsibility of both state and non-state combatants to ensure that civilians get help. Hence, my delegation calls all parties concerned, both state and non-state combatants, to respect the basic rights of displaced civilians and the passage of humanitarian assistance.

As regards conflict-induced displacement, my delegation has particular attention to the need of vulnerable groups, especially children and women. My delegation stresses that all parties to a conflict make arrangements to meet the protection and assistance requirements of children and women and to ensure the unhindered delivery of their basic necessary services.

My delegation is also very concerned over the difficulty that displaced civilians are facing in refugee camps caused by armed conflict within and around the camps. A recent example of such a situation is the suffering that armed clashes between LAF and Fatah Al-Islam have inflicted on civilians, especially Palestinians in the refugee camps.

In that regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate our call on all parties concerned to show respect for the safety and security of civilians under any circumstances.

Still on humanitarian aspect of protection civilians, as civilians increasingly become targets in armed conflict, so do humanitarian workers who provide the civilians with humanitarian assistance. This act is extremely deplorable knowing that the workers went because they wanted to help and they went because they have compassion and want to mitigate the human suffering.

My delegation, therefore, call all parties concerned to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian workers, who themselves are civilians. We also attach great importance to the 1994 Convention on the Safety of UN and Associated Personnel and its Optional Protocol. Preventive measures should also be taken, including impartiality and neutrality in the operation of humanitarian aids.

Mr. President,

Before I conclude, let me say a few words about the threat to civilians posed by landmines and other munitions. Civilians, including farmers and school children, in over sixty countries remain under the threat of anti-personnel

landmines. The affected countries bear a costly burden and their citizens have to deal with potential death or injury every time they take a step.

Indonesia, therefore, welcomes mine action activities by the UN, in collaboration with governments and other international organizations. We underline the importance of de-mining, victim assistance, mine-risk education, and destruction of stockpiled landmines as part of mine action. We urge countries which hold information about the sites of the mines and other munitions they deployed during the war to share the information, especially with the UN, as a basis for further action.

In conclusion, Mr. President, my delegation holds the view that protection of civilians in armed conflict is multi-faceted and thus requires comprehensive measures, including both legal and humanitarian ones. Political will of all parties concerned is essential in the implementation of those measures.

Indonesia continues to regard the important role that the international community can play in the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Indonesia also wishes to reaffirm its support for measures outlined in Security Council resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1674 (2006) and 1738 (2006).

I thank you.