

## Tenth Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 22 November 2010

On 22 November 2010, the UN Security Council held the tenth open debate on the Protection of Civilians (POC) in Armed Conflict. Discussions covered the main issues and challenges laid out by the UN Secretary-General in his 11 November

[report](#)

on POC. Additionally, the UNSC issued a

[Presidential Statement](#)

, which focused on protection of the most vulnerable populations such as women, children, refugees and IDPs. The Statement called for accountability in post-conflict and war torn societies, and respect of “international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law” by all warring parties and highlighted the “stocktaking of international criminal justice undertaken by the first Review Conference of the Rome Statute held in Kampala, Uganda from 31 May to 11 June 2010”. It also deplored attacks targeting humanitarian personnel and calls for the inclusion of POC mandates in UN peacekeeping missions.

The Security Council adopted an

[updated version](#)

of the 15 March 2002 OCHA aide memoire annexed to the Presidential Statement. According to

[UNSC Press Release](#)

, the aide memoire specified “core objectives for providing protection and assistance to conflict-affected civilians”.

Forty-eight Member States spoke during the proceedings, and seven States made specific reference to RtoP in their speeches. Italy and Ghana both welcomed ongoing debates in the General Assembly and encouraged Member States to keep discussing and developing the norm. Argentina referred directly to RtoP as an important tool to ensure accountability while Bangladesh and the EU Delegation highlighted the preventive aspects of RtoP. Conversely, Sudan expressed strong opposition to the principle. Others, such as the US, Liechtenstein and France, indirectly referred to RtoP or its core principles by mentioning the four crimes or RtoP country-specific situations such as election violence in Guinea

[See](#)

all excerpted RtoP statements from the debate.

UN Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Valerie Amos, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Alain Le Roy, and Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Yves Daccord, also spoke during the debate. Along with Members States involved in the POC debate, they discussed three main themes:

The responsibility of state and non-state parties to conflict to grant humanitarian personnel safe and unlimited access in order to provide timely and efficient humanitarian assistance to populations living in volatile areas.

To hold violators of human rights and international humanitarian law accountable, including through strengthened national judicial institutions or mixed courts, working in cooperation with UN Commissions of Inquiry, and the International Criminal Court when necessary.

In the wake of the Congo mass rapes, Member States pointed out the importance of making protection of civilians a focus of DPKO strategies, especially protection of women and children in cases of mass sexual violence and child soldiers recruitment.