

*Statement by*  
***Ambassador Dr. Bashar Ja'afari***  
*Permanent representative*  
*Of*  
***The Syrian Arab Republic***

*At*  
***Security Council***  
*On*  
***"Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts"***

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Mr. President,

Allow me first to welcome Mr. Kim Sung-Hwan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, and to thank him for chairing this important meeting. I also welcome my colleague, Ambassador Kim Sook who is presiding the work of the Security Council for this month. I also welcome the honorable foreign ministers of Azerbaijan, Brazil and Rwanda in this session.

Mr. President,

I have listened carefully to the statements of the delegations that spoke on this important item. I would like to thank all the people of goodwill who talked about the crisis in Syria, and presented positive ideas such as the protection of Syrian civilians from the repercussions of the crisis the country is witnessing. As for those who deal with the crisis in my country with criticism and denigrating, and threw accusations left and right, I would like to stress that their governments are an essential part of intensifying the heat of the crisis in my country, either through imposing coercive measures, or by permitting the fundamentalists, terrorists and takfiris of their citizens to leave their countries and head for Syria, or, also by allowing those terrorists to cross Syria's borders with neighboring countries, or by arming, funding and harboring of those terrorists and advocating them in the media.

Here, it is need to emphasize the following key points:

1) The best way to protect civilians in armed conflict, and to spare them the scourge of war lies mainly in preventing armed conflicts, and adopting peaceful means to settle the existing ones, and holding accountable the governments that worked, and still working, to initiate and incite those conflicts. We still have the latest experience of protection of civilians in Libya alive in our memories.

2) The issue of the protection of civilians in armed conflict cannot be set right unless under strict respect for the principles of international law and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the principles of respect for sovereignty and sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs. It is totally unacceptable to deal with this important issue arbitrarily and selectively, and in a way that empty it of its content, and makes it loose in order to accommodate many forms of abuse and misapplication.

3) One of the most important principles of sovereignty is that the State has the exclusive and primary responsibility to protect its citizens, and this is a fundamental rule of international law approved by the founding fathers of this organization.

4) Practical experiences proved that the issue of protection of civilians in areas of conflict or

interest is used as a pretext to serve intrusive and suspicious agendas, and interests of certain countries working to aggravate and manipulate tensions. Not only that, but the practice adopted by governments of some of those countries drifted away from the simplest principles of international law of human rights and international humanitarian law. We started witnessing attempts to market political proposals which did not enjoy international consensus, such as the so-called "Responsibility to Protect" and "Humanitarian Intervention", which is being marketed in order to create a public opinion that can pave the way for a NATO military intervention in the domestic affairs of developing countries, and to change its existing ruling governments.

Mr. President,

Addressing the issue of protection of civilians in armed conflict must be done in a holistic manner, based on the promotion of peaceful settlement of disputes, and to condemn and hold accountable the government of states that support armed violence and terrorism, and incite them through Media and sectarian provocation. Also, through putting an end to countries that act in a way infringing on the sovereignty of states and their territorial integrity, not even that, but also invading them militarily and killing hundreds of thousands of their people and displacing millions of citizens on the pretext of protecting them. Protection of civilians also requires not subjecting those civilians to suffering and slow death by depriving them of daily living necessities, such as food, medicine, fuel and others through imposing unfair, unilateral and coercive measures by some countries, measures confirmed illegitimate by the United Nations.

Mr. President,

My delegation renews the emphasis on the need to provide protection for civilians living under Israeli occupation in the occupied Arab territories, including the occupied Syrian Golan, and to put an end to the aggressive practices of the occupation authorities towards them.

Mr. President,

Despite our opposition to the exploitation by some delegations for the subject of our discussion today, and reflecting it on the regrettable events that Syria is witnessing currently, we point out that caring for Syrian civilians, if it is serious, does not go in line with the policies pursued by well-known Arab, regional and Western countries, boasting publicly about providing arms, funding and training and safe haven to armed terrorist groups crossing the borders and largely by the Syrian state with all its components, and taking civilian populated places as a base for their terrorist operations, and using civilians as human shields. We strongly believe that the concern for Syrian civilians should not be expressed through sponsoring terrorism and extortion, and derail efforts of settlement, and not through exerting pressure in order to undermine any possibility for the inclusive national dialogue that can enable Syrians to restore security and stability, and determine their own future through a Syrian-led political process.

among the Syrians, as stressed by Security Council resolutions 2042 and 2043 and Geneva communiqué.

**Mr. President,**

There is a difference between protection offered to innocent civilians, which is a noble task, and the protection of insurgents, terrorists, fundamentalists, those who recruit children and those who fire at civilian airplanes and diplomatic missions, and target mainly the safety of civilians, and destroy the State's infrastructure, which is originally intended to serve those civilians.

The Syrian government continues to carry out its constitutional duty in protecting its citizens from acts of terrorism and sabotage. The government is working to restore security and stability, and also doing its best, despite the unilateral and unjust measures and enormous pressure to which it is exposed, to meet the needs of citizens, and to provide shelter for those forced by the distressing events and terrorism to leave their homes and facilitate their safe return to their homes. The Syrian government has, also, provided all the necessary facilities for the relevant United Nations agencies to help in this regard. On the other hand, the National Committee of Investigation of current events continues its tasks to ensure that those proved involved in acts of violence are presented to justice for accountability, without any exceptions.

In conclusion, the unethical political trading in the situation of Syrian refugees, and organizing media conferences only to announce pledges that are not fulfilled most of the time, are not consistent with the effort to protect civilians, and not with the fact that many of the countries that announce pledges of donations are themselves the basic reason of the displacement and suffering of these refugees.

Finally, I would like to say that the arrogance of the Israeli Representative gave him the illusion that he is either Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar, Saladin or even Abraham Lincoln or Gandhi or Simon Bolivar. He also thinks that the aggressive policies of his country, and its occupation of Arab territories, and its oppression of the Palestinian people must be a role model for all Member States of this organization. He misses the fact that this organization has spent thousands of hours of work and hundreds of decisions to end the aggression and occupation by Israel. But his usual arrogance and utter ignorance made him believe that the policies of his country are more important than the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and that the so-called international community must revere Israeli oppression of the Palestinians and Arabs in the occupied Arab territories.

Ladies and gentlemen, Israel arms, supports and sponsor takfiri Salafi groups operating in the greatest separation in the occupied Syrian Golan, and, therefore, Israel is an integral part of the intensifying the ongoing crisis in Syria.

**Thank you, Mr. President.**