

**Statement by H.E. Yuriy Sergeyev,
Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations,
at the UN Security Council open debate “Protection of civilians in armed conflict”**

May 10, 2011

Thank you, Mr. President,

Thank you for giving the floor to Ukraine to contribute to this important and timely debate. Let me thank Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos, Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy and Assistant Secretary-General Ivan Simonovic for their insightful briefings.

Ukraine aligns itself with the Statement of the European Union.

Mr. President,

Ukraine is alarmed by the fact that civilians continue to account for the majority of casualties in conflict as well as by high number of displaced persons. We are deeply concerned by the frequency and gravity of attacks against civilians, especially women and children, problems of safety of humanitarian personal and timely humanitarian access to those in need, particularly to vulnerable groups. My country pays great importance to these issues, in particular as an active participant of peacekeeping operations, a member of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Executive Board and the Bureau of UN-Women.

Mr. President,

We welcome increasing understanding of the primacy of protection of civilians in situations of armed conflicts and ever growing attention to this issue within the United Nations. Ukraine commends the work conducted by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative on sexual violence in conflict as well as the Member-States, in particular within the fulfillment of the resolutions related to women, peace and security.

My delegation fully supports approach of addressing the issue of protection of civilians in a comprehensive manner. This entails, in particular, undertaking further actions to address core challenges, namely to enhance compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including by non-state armed groups; to improve the mechanisms of protection of civilians through UN peace operations; to enhance humanitarian access and strengthen accountability for violations.

In this context we support the systematic use of practical tools such as the updated version of Aide Memoire 2002. We believe that coherence and mainstreaming of protection, including through stronger interaction between all relevant actors, as well as monitoring and oversight, in particular through development of indicators for the protection of civilians, could still be improved.

Accountability for violations of international law, including the deliberate targeting of civilians, their use as human shields, indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks, delays or denials of humanitarian access are also the issues to be tackled. How to translate thematic principles into protection of civilian on the ground and to enhance prevention, including through early warning and assessment in the context of the responsibility to protect, should, in our view, be focuses of all our efforts.

Mr. President,

It is the principles mentioned above that Ukraine's commitment to the efforts of the United Nations in the sphere of protection of civilians in armed conflict stems from.

Among the recent concrete manifestations of such an unwavering commitment one can single out a humanitarian mission "Kostiantyn Olshansky" carried out by Ukraine this April with the aim of evacuating civilians from Libya. As a result of this initiative by the President of Ukraine, a total of 193 citizens of 20 nationalities, including 78 women and 35 children, were taken on board of the large amphibious landing ship "Kostiantyn Olshansky" out of harm's way.

Let me stress that this mission was undertaken in full accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, namely 1970 (2011) and 1973 (2011), with the Secretary-General being duly notified from the very outset.

It is the same unshaken commitment and sense of responsibility for the protection of civilians under the imminent threat of violence that lies behind Ukraine's decision to actively participate in temporary reinforcements of the UN Operation in Cote d'Ivoire (UNOCI). We are proud of the contribution that Ukrainian Aviation Unit made to the United Nations efforts aimed at saving civilians in Abidjan, thanks to which hundreds or rather thousands of innocent lives, mainly those of women and children, were spared of the imminent danger posed by the deadly heavy weaponry.

As in the first case, Ukraine acted strictly in accordance with the international law, in particular unanimously adopted Security Council resolution 1975 (2011).

Finally, Mr. President, let me assure you that my country will further spare no efforts to contribute to our common goal of protection of civilians around the world.

I thank you.