



PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

STATEMENT

by

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**Permanent Mission of Slovakia
to the United Nations**

**Open debate of the Security Council
on
Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts**

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-Check against delivery-

Thank you Madam President,

At the outset I would like to thank the Indonesian Presidency for organizing this important debate. I would also like to extend gratitude to the UN Secretary-General for his recent report covering the global state of the protection of civilians, and a big thank you also goes to the International Committee of the Red Cross and to the Center for Civilians in Conflict.

While fully aligning myself with the statement of the European Union to be delivered later this afternoon, I would like to offer a few additional reflections in national capacity.

Madam President,

As mentioned by many speakers before me, this year marks two important milestones, the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions and the 20th anniversary of the landmark resolution 1265 by which this Council added the protection of civilians as an item to its agenda. The former, was motivated by the aftermath of World War Two, while the latter was a reaction to the reports from the Secretary-General Kofi Annan concerning the situation in Africa and the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Civilians accounted for the vast majority of casualties in armed conflicts and were increasingly targeted by combatants and armed elements. Women, children and other vulnerable groups, including refugees and internally displaced persons were especially targeted by acts of violence.

Today, 20 years later, we read in the report of the Secretary-General that “the state of the protection of civilians today is tragically similar to 20 years ago”. Civilians still account for the vast majority of casualties in armed conflicts, and women, children and other vulnerable groups still remain the target.

The protection of civilians, although sounding like one task, goes beyond a number of areas that affect their protection. From clear and enforceable mandates, effective training and deployment of peacemakers, respect for human rights, to creating a safe environment for return and further development of states.

Slovakia will continue to support the Security Sector Reform agenda in which the parties will be responsible for the protection of civilians, respect for human rights, political dialogue and arms control. Civilians - citizens are #NotATarget - they are the foundation of any state, without our protection and respect for their rights, and the creation of a habitable environment we fail in our fundamental role - peace.

Slovakia is also a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court, and its role in the fight against impunity and bringing perpetrators to justice. Achieving universal jurisdiction of the ICC would be a major step in this regard.

Madam President,

We have gone a long way in the past 20 years, but we are not there yet. Sadly, it seems that we are not even half-way there. A lot has been done to strengthen the framework for the protection of civilians in armed conflict, but due to the nature of contemporary warfare, the bar keeps rising and therefore more needs to be done.

On the regional level by enhancing compliance by non-State armed groups. On the national level by developing national policy frameworks on the protection of civilians. And on the international level by promoting compliance through advocacy and accountability and by continuous joint Member States, UN actors and civil society engagement and dialogue on this topic.

Thank you for your attention.