



**BANGLADESH**

---

*Please check against delivery*

Statement by

**Mohammad Sarwar Mahmood**

CDA, a.i and Counsellor

Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the United Nations  
at the Open Debate on "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" at the Security  
Council

New York, 10 May 2011

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating France on its assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of May 2011. I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. Allow me also to express our sincere thanks to the USG for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ms. Valerie Amos, USG for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alain Le Roy and ASG of the UNHC for Human Rights, Mr. Ivan Simonovic for their elaborative briefing this morning.

Mr. President,

Civilians continue to account for the vast majority of casualties in armed conflicts. It is against this backdrop that the States Members of the Organization pledged in the Millennium Declaration "to expand and strengthen the protection of civilians in complex emergencies".

Protection for civilians is a basic principle of humanitarian law: civilians not taking part in the fighting must on no account be attacked and must be spared and protected. The 1949 Geneva Conventions and their 1977 Additional Protocols contain specific rules to protect civilians. In situations that are not covered by these treaties, in particular internal disturbances, civilians are protected by the fundamental principles of humanitarian law and human rights law.

Ironically, a large number of civilians continue to be exposed to the atrocities of conflict!

Mr. President,

The vulnerable situation of civilians in post-conflict societies needs special attention. Long after guns have fallen silent, such people remain traumatized by the atrocities of war. For peace to be sustained, they must be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities more effectively, and the perpetrators must bear the resultant cost.

Peacekeeping operations are one of the important tools available to the United Nations to protect civilians in armed conflict. Being one of the largest troop-contributing countries, Bangladesh is playing its part in ensuring peace and security in different parts of the world. In several situations, like in Cote d'Ivoire, our peacekeepers were also injured by the parties to the conflict while performing their duty. We feel that in peace-keeping missions, the issue of resource-gap should be adequately addressed. Similarly, it should also be kept in mind that the UN Blue Helmets can not be seen as the only instrument to protect civilians in such situations. The host country has the primary responsibility of protecting its civilians. International efforts including the use of force should be the last resort, while respecting the relevant provisions of the UN Charter. May I also add here that the presence of uniformed female personnel may play a pivotal role in a State's ability to

protect its citizens. Here I take this opportunity to refer to the efforts of the all-female-formed Bangladesh police unit working in peace keeping mission in Haiti.

Mr. President,

I would like to mention what my delegation considers two overarching themes for the protection of civilians in armed conflict. *The first* relates to prevention and the building of a culture of peace. Prevention is at the heart of protection. The preventive capacity of the Organization must be enhanced. At the same time, Member States need to take steps to inculcate the values of peace, tolerance and harmony that contribute to long-term prevention.

*The second* theme is that of coordination among all stakeholders, including various political, humanitarian, military and development components of UN missions in the field. We appreciate some improvements in this regard. However, much needs to be done. My delegation stresses upon the effective coordination, particularly among the OCHA, the Office of the UNHCR, the DPKO, and the DPA.

Mr. President,

My delegation condemns all violations of international humanitarian and human rights law and stresses the need to combat impunity, safeguard access for humanitarian assistance and protect the safety of humanitarian aid workers. My delegation expresses its grave concern over such violations and breaches of law. For example, total disregard and rejection of humanitarian and international laws and values, especially being committed by occupation forces in the occupied territories of Palestine for years are a disgrace for humanity.

In Libya, civilians continue to be attacked during the conflict. We are greatly worried at the report of deaths and injuries and violence. Delivery of essential medical supplies and other relief items, as well as the evacuation of third-country nationals, the wounded, and others who require emergency medical assistance, have also been severely affected.

Finally, my delegation strongly urges the international community, particularly the Council, to take effective steps to ensure respect for and compliance with the Geneva Conventions in all such situations in a uniform manner. We urge the parties to conflict to comply strictly with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, for the protection of civilians and unimpeded access to humanitarian aid. We call on all parties to conflicts to strengthen the protection of civilians through heightened awareness at all levels, particularly through the training, orders and instructions issued to armed forces.

I thank you, Mr. President.