



Malaysia

Permanent Mission to the United Nations

(Please check against delivery)

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Hussein Haniff,
Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations
at the Security Council Debate on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict,
New York, 12 February 2013**

Mr. President,

Allow me to join the others in welcoming Your Excellency, Kim Sung-Hwan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea to New York. I would also take this opportunity to convey my congratulations to you, and the Republic of Korea, on assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for this month. Malaysia wishes to align itself with the statement made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

2. My delegation is of the view that the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts is an important issue to be addressed by the United Nations including developing appropriate responses to improve civilian protection.

Mr. President,

3. Malaysia is concerned with the increasing number of civilian casualties, injured, maimed and displaced due to armed conflicts, and in this regard we join other nations in underscoring the importance of protecting civilians from these dangers. Today, even with 15 ongoing United Nations Peacekeeping operations worldwide, and with continued emphasis to protect civilians in conflict areas, the number of civilian casualties remains high.

4. Malaysia concurs that the provision of civilian protection mandates by the Security Council to peacekeeping operations is vital in curbing violence inflicted against civilians. On this note, my delegation is of the view that mission leaders should ensure that their missions, in particular those with a civilian-protection mandate, conduct their tasks without prejudice to that responsibility. In implementing these mandates, we would also urge a greater emphasis and focus on reporting and monitoring of protection of civilians against the established benchmarks and key performance indicators, which could be reported to this Council on a regular basis.

5. While the implementation of these protection measures are undertaken through the various peacekeeping operations, efforts must continue to educate all stakeholders of the importance of protecting civilians, especially women and children, in armed conflict. My delegation particularly deplores the deliberate use of sexual violence against women, as well as violations and abuses against children.

6. Further work must also be given to enhance compliance with international law by all parties involved in armed conflicts. My delegation also shares the view that those who violate international law, including international humanitarian and human rights law, and who deliberately target civilian population centers and humanitarian personnel, must be held responsible and accountable. The absence of accountability will allow violations to thrive with impunity.

7. Malaysia also believes that secure and unhindered access for United Nations humanitarian personnel is imperative for the provision of humanitarian assistance. My delegation is of the view that the Council should

also explore the possibility of strengthening provisions to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel, within the framework of the protection of civilians.

Mr. President,

8. The world cannot turn a blind eye in the issue of protecting civilians in conflict affected areas. For example, today, we continue to witness amongst the worst attacks on innocent civilians by the occupier in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. Israel is proven to have violated Article 4 of the Geneva Convention, international law, that also includes international humanitarian and human rights laws. Recently, during the universally condemned Operation Pillar of Defence, hundreds of Palestinians, including women and children, were murdered in the Gaza Strip, while thousands more were displaced by this inhumane, illegal and criminal military operation. This is just one of many other occasions when Israel unleashed disproportionate military power against the helpless Palestinian population in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It has been reported that generally 84% of casualties from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas are civilians.

9. While we deplore the killing of civilians, this Council should ask if we have done enough to protect civilians. The world would judge us on both counts, that is, what have we done, and what we did not do, to protect innocent civilians.

Mr. President,

10. Malaysia continues to be concerned with the loss of civilian lives in the conflict in Syria. The staggering number of civilian lives lost is appalling and we condemn the indiscriminate attacks by the parties concerned on civilian population centers, knowing that these attacks would result in civilian casualties. My delegation holds that there remains an opportunity to protect further Syrian civilians from the scorches of war. I urge the Parties involved to adhere to the spirit of the Joint Communique of the Action Group for Syria in Geneva of 30 June 2012. This Communique remains an important document for all sides to implement. My delegation underscores that finding a Syrian led political solution must be the prime motivation of all parties involved.

Mr. President,

11. Malaysia has been contributing to the UN peacekeeping operations since 1960. Currently, the men and women of the Malaysian Armed Forces and Royal Malaysian Police are deployed in seven UN peacekeeping operations worldwide. Our military and policemen are present in UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), UN Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID), UN Organization Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) and UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). In all the peacekeeping operations, Malaysian observers and peacekeepers have always prioritized protection of civilians, and this important pillar of peacekeeping is a very visible subject in the training of our peacekeepers. On this note, Mr. President, I wish to ensure that Malaysian personnel in these and future peacekeeping missions would continue to uphold this sacred duty of the international peacekeeping missions. Winning the hearts and minds of the local population, through protecting them in armed conflicts, would go a long way in ensuring that the UN would continue to be well received by the people.

Mr. President,

12. In concluding, Malaysia would continue to insist that the protection of civilians in armed conflicts is as important as making and keeping the peace. We underscore the significance and importance of UN Security Council resolutions 1738 (2006), 1910 (2010) and 1894 (2009) in ensuring that civilians are protected during armed conflicts. We look forward to further contribute to the work and development on protection of civilian concepts, initiatives and mandates in peacekeeping operations and supporting countries in transition, to ensure sustainable and long lasting peace in the many theatres of conflict worldwide.

I thank you, Mr. President.