

Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict
United Nations Security Council Open Debate
4 December 2006

On 4 December 2006, the Qatar Presidency of the Security Council held an open debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. The Council, in a Presidential statement issued in December 2002, recognized the value of focusing on this issue every six months due to recommendations from the Secretary-General's report from 26 November 2002. Prior to the debate, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mr. Jan Egeland, briefed the Council for the last time in his capacity as Under-Secretary-General.

In addition to Mr. Egeland, of the 22 States who contributed to the discussion, 8 made explicit reference to the International Criminal Court, the Court's work, and/or Rome Statute, including Ghana, Slovakia, the United Kingdom, Greece, Denmark, Peru, the Russian Federation and Finland, on behalf of the European Union.

The following excerpts were taken directly from the UN meeting record and are listed in the order they were presented (S/PV.5577).

Speaker / Country	Statement
Mr. Jan Egeland, Under-Secretary- General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	“The third concern is sexual violence. Rape and sexual violence are not simply an unfortunate consequence of conflict; increasingly, they are a deliberate and devastating weapon against individuals as well as targeted communities. Despite recent ground-breaking International Criminal Court indictments for the use of rape as a war crime, sexual violence continues unchecked and unchallenged.”
H.E. Ambassador Nana Effah-Apenteng, Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations	“Our goal of providing protection to civilian victims in conflict would be bolstered by the arrest and trial of perpetrators of acts of impunity and gross human rights abuses. We are therefore encouraged by some actions recently taken by the International Criminal Court in that direction. We hope that the force of example will serve as a deterrent to unscrupulous adventurers from indulging in such heinous crimes.”
H.E. Ambassador Peter Burian, Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations	“We would like to underline that impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity is unacceptable and that national judicial authorities have the primary responsibility to bring the perpetrators of crimes to justice. In situations where the national judicial authorities are not fully capable of addressing the violation of international humanitarian law, Slovakia fully supports the engagement of the international and mixed tribunals, including the International Criminal Court.”
H.E. Ambassador Sir Emyr Jones Parry, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations	“I believe there would be advantage in a briefing to the Council on these very issues by the Department of Safety and Security, because impunity cannot be tolerated — not for attacks on humanitarian and United Nations workers, not for attacks on journalists, and not for attacks on civilians. Such acts should be properly investigated and guilty parties must be held accountable. Where States are unable or unwilling to do this, the international community should be prepared to take action. We welcome the developments that have taken place in 2006, with the arrests of individuals accused of terrible crimes, such as Charles Taylor and Thomas Lubanga.”
H.E. Ambassador Adamantios Th. Vassilakis, Permanent Representative of	“Respect for the principles of the rule of law and international humanitarian law and fighting impunity are essential for civilian protection. States and non-State actors have the obligation to respect international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, and perpetrators should be brought to justice. In that respect,

Greece to the United Nations	the role of the International Criminal Court and its impact on those committing such atrocities could be crucial, and the international community and the States concerned should fully cooperate with the Court and support its difficult task. National judicial institutions should also be in a position to tackle impunity, and local justice systems should be supported. The Security Council should continue to give attention to rule of law issues, which should be incorporated in the mandates of peacekeeping missions.”
H.E. Ambassador Ellen Margrethe Løj, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations	“The protection of civilians is a multifaceted challenge, and so must our response be. We must put to their best use the relatively limited number of tools available to the Security Council. That includes increasing our capacity to monitor and report on violations against civilians — an effort that is being successfully spearheaded on the issue of children affected by armed conflict. But it also includes referring violators to international courts, including the International Criminal Court, and using targeted sanctions to deter attacks against civilians, including humanitarian workers, workers for non-governmental organizations and journalists. The Council must overcome its reluctance to fully use those tools if it seriously wishes to move the protection agenda forward.”
H.E. Ambassador Jorge Voto-Bernales, Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations	“Likewise, the Council must cooperate with the International Criminal Court in the fight against impunity. Effectively penalizing of those responsible for grave human rights violations is an obligation of the international community and a powerful signal of the validity of the rule of law.”
H.E. Mr. Igor N. Shcherbak, First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations	“Our delegation attaches great importance to eliminating impunity and to the prosecution of all persons guilty of crimes against civilians. In that regard, we would note the role of the International Criminal Court.”
H.E. Ambassador Kirsti Lintonen, Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations (on behalf of the EU)	“The European Union believes it is vital to investigate crimes under international law committed against civilians and bring their perpetrators to justice. The restoration of law and order to prevent future violence and abuses and the tackling of impunity should be a priority. It is for States concerned to bring justice to perpetrators of the most serious crimes and for the international community to support their efforts. Where States fail to bring perpetrators of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice, the international community should be able to act. The European Union urges States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Rome Statute and to the treaties of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee laws, and to take all appropriate measures to ensure proper investigation and prosecution of any violations of the relevant rules.”