



**CHAIR OF
THE COORDINATING BUREAU
OF THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT**



**STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY THE DELEGATION OF THE
BOLIVARIAN REPUBLIC OF VENEZUELA, ON BEHALF OF THE NON-
ALIGNED MOVEMENT (NAM), DURING THE MINISTERIAL OPEN
DEBATE OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON THE “PROTECTION OF
CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICTS”**

New York, 23 May 2019

Madam President,

1. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has the honor to take the floor on behalf of the 120 Member States comprising the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
2. At the outset, we would like to convey, on behalf of the Member States of the Movement, our respects to H.E. Mrs. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, and to express through her our appreciation to the Indonesian Delegation, a fellow non-aligned country, for the Concept Note drafted to guide our discussions today.
3. Similarly, we would like to express our appreciation to the briefers for their much valuable presentations.

Madam President,

4. We currently live in a world that faces multiple, complex and newly emerging threats and challenges to international peace and security, including, among others, as a result of war and protracted conflicts.
5. In the context of armed conflicts, we have seen how the human suffering of the innocent civilians that are caught up in the middle of armed conflicts, particularly the most vulnerable, can be further exacerbated by deliberate, indiscriminate and, in some cases, systematic attacks, in clear violation of the norms of international humanitarian law.
6. During the XVIII Mid-Term Ministerial Conference of the Movement, held in April 2018, in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, the Ministers stressed that the protection of civilians is the primary responsibility of the host country, while recognizing that this is a task which is also mandated in a number of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, to which they reaffirmed their commitment.



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7. In this context, allow us to emphasize the importance of protection of civilians, where mandated, and the need for peacekeeping to support national efforts towards that end, conscious of the fact that the primary responsibility for protection lies with the Host State. This protection should not be used as a sole basis for military intervention by the United Nations in conflicts. The current lack of resources for peacekeeping operations and the difficulty of providing troops and equipment for military operations to carry out this extraordinary and difficult task should be particularly addressed. Hence, we stress that effective implementation of protection of civilian mandates critically depends on sufficient resources (financial, personnel and assets), as well as clear and achievable mandates, while recognizing that the expectations concerning the ability of Peacekeeping Missions to protect civilians are often unrealistic.

Madam President,

8. Protection of civilians is indeed one of the core issues on the agenda of this Security Council, particularly as a result of the significant challenges faced by civilians in conflict-affected countries, ranging from threats or attacks against them, to forced displacement, food insecurity or the need for humanitarian assistance. For that reason, this body must ensure, among others, that the norms of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, are upheld and respected at all times, particularly in the context of armed conflicts.
9. Therefore, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) seizes this opportunity to call upon all parties to armed conflicts to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, including the principles of precautions against the effects of attacks, proportionality and distinction, by, *inter alia*, prohibiting the targeting of civilian populations, civilian property and certain special property during an armed conflict, and obliging parties to any conflict to ensure general protection against dangers arising from military operations for civilian installations, schools, hospitals, means of transportation and relief materials, and distribution of such relief materials, as well as other critical infrastructure.
10. Moreover, the Member State of the Movement stress the fact that humanitarian agencies and their personnel must respect international humanitarian law and the laws of the countries they work in, as well as the guiding principles of humanitarian assistance set forth in the Annex of General Assembly resolution 46/182, including humanity, neutrality and impartiality, and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the host countries, as well as the sovereignty, territorial integrity, national unity and independence of States.



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11. Before concluding, we would like to recall that over 88% of peacekeeping personnel deployed in the field come from Non-Aligned countries, carrying out mandates with the centrality of protection of civilians. As we have always emphasized, the delivery of the mandates depends on, among other things, the effective tripartite coordination between the T/PCCs, Security Council and the UN Secretariat. In any case, the protection of civilians may hardly be ensured unless the peacekeepers are fully enabled to operate from the highest morale at all times. For this, the importance of all measures to ensure their safety and security cannot be overemphasized.
12. Similarly, we consider that, building on a renewed and revitalized partnership of shared responsibility between the Security Council, the troop and police contributing countries and the Secretariat, much more can be done for engaging and involving local and affected communities in the design and implementation of protection of civilians measures and mandates, as pointed in the Concept Note prepared for this Open Debate.
13. Lastly, the 120 Member States of the Movement strongly condemn all acts of violence, attacks and threats against civilian populations, which may amount to war crimes, and deplore the long-term consequences they have, while stressing the importance of ensuring that those responsible be held accountable, in order to break any impunity cycle, and send a clear and united message of zero-tolerance to these despicable acts.

I thank you, Madam President.