



Permanent Mission of Hungary
to the United Nations
New York

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Open debate of the Security Council
on
“the Protection of Civilians and Healthcare in Armed Conflict”

25 May 2017

Intervention by
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Permanent Representative

Your Excellency, Mr. President,

Honorable members of the Security Council, Dear Colleagues,

Hungary aligns itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. President,

I wish to thank Uruguay for organizing today's open debate on the protection of civilians and healthcare in armed conflict. We share the view that the issue of healthcare in armed conflicts should be addressed in the wider context of protection of civilians, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian access and strengthening compliance with international humanitarian law.

We also firmly believe that the protection of civilians should be integral to the whole of UN peace operations having such a mandate. It is important to keep continuous consultations and enhance communication between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop and police contributing countries about possible gaps in mission mandates.

Hungary attaches great importance to the observance of international humanitarian law and the protection of the victims of armed conflicts. As thousands of civilians are not only suffering from the impacts of armed conflicts, but are also becoming subjects of military strategies of different parties to conflicts, the international community must step up all its efforts to enhance the respect of international humanitarian law.

Security Council Resolution 2286 sent a strong signal that any attack against medical personnel and facilities in conflict situations is absolutely unacceptable. But while we regularly call the attention of the international community upon the protection of civilians and the atrocities committed against innocent people and medical personnel, we are all aware of the daily facts revealing hardly any changes for the better.

War, violence and insecurity are the biggest obstacles of development and humanitarian aid. Humanitarian access to affected populations continues to be a challenge; therefore, protection of medical care in conflict and humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable populations must continue to be of highest concern.

According to WHO reports, an alarmingly high number of attacks are committed against health care institutions and medical personnel in conflict zones. It is with sobering sadness that several shocking examples still could not bring about changes in moral standards. The ongoing war in Syria and the atrocities like the recent attacks on several hospitals underline the importance of ensuring better protection to those who provide health care services to victims of armed conflicts.

In cases where international efforts fail and atrocity crimes – including attacks against healthcare institutions and medical personnel – are committed, accountability is crucial. Hungary is committed to support institutions dedicated to ensuring accountability and establishing an environment of respect for international humanitarian law, such as international courts and tribunals and other mechanisms.

In this spirit, Hungary decided to offer a voluntary contribution of 50.000 Euros for the establishment of International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011.

As a member of the Human Rights Council for the term 2017-2019, one of our priorities will be to work towards the prevention of atrocity crimes and to promote already existing tools of the international community that can contribute to effective and timely response.

We would also like to reaffirm the relevance of the Responsibility to Protect for today's discussions. In order to ensure more timely and decisive response by the Security Council, Hungary actively participated in the creation of the "Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes", elaborated by the ACT Group and already signed by 112 Member States.

I would therefore like to invite those Member States who have not yet done it to join this initiative, which represents a unique chance to not only improve the Security Council's ability to prevent and respond to atrocities, but also an opportunity to preserve the Council's legitimacy as the guardian of international peace and security. Let me also express my gratitude in this regard for the efforts of Uruguay in continuously promoting the Code of Conduct in the deliberations of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

Hungary believes that the best way to protect civilians is through the prevention of armed conflicts. The UN should use all its tools available for early warning and for political mediation in order to prevent the outbreak and reverse the escalation of hostilities. In this regard, we wholeheartedly support the initiative of the Secretary-General for a surge in diplomacy for peace and to placing prevention in the center of our joint efforts. Since Hungary fully shares this vision, the Government has made voluntary contributions in 2016 and 2017 to support the work of the Department of Political Affairs in preventive diplomacy and mediation.

I thank you.