



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

NEW YORK, 23 MAY 2019
SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS

**STATEMENT BY GEORG SPARBER, CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I.
PERMANENT MISSION OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein associates itself with the statement read out by Switzerland on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Protection of Civilians.

2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the UN Security Council protection of civilians in armed conflict agenda. This year also marks the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, which are the cornerstone of contemporary international humanitarian law. This crucial body of law is the primary framework to regulate situations of armed conflict - designed, first and foremost, to protect civilians.

In his report, the Secretary-General underscores the importance of enhancing and ensuring compliance with the law, and accountability for violations with respect to the protection of civilians. A key responsibility to ensure such compliance rests with the Security Council. It has several tools at its disposal, ranging from support for national efforts to ensuring accountability through referrals to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Council's overall record, however, is unfortunately mixed at best. The people of Syria, for example, have been at the receiving end of the failure of the Council to act, several times due to a veto cast by one or

more Permanent Members of the Council. This failure to act prompted the General Assembly to play a more active role in the area of accountability by creating the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism (IIIM) for Syria. This decision was a major step forward to ensure that violations of international law in Syria will not go unpunished and also a landmark decision for the accountability work of the United Nations. We look forward to the financing of this Mechanism from the regular budget of the United Nations later this year.

Mr. President,

The Council's work in this area must be forward looking, as well as comprehensive and consistent in its implementation of initiatives that can help to protect civilians trapped in conflict situations. One such initiative is the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes put forward by the ACT Group and currently supported by 119 States, including two-thirds of the current Security Council members. The Code of Conduct is a political commitment to take timely and decisive action aimed at preventing or ending atrocity crimes and not to vote against credible draft resolutions put forward to this end. It foresees a very important role for the Secretary-General in submitting relevant information to the Security Council and is thus complementary to and reinforces the Secretary-General's prevention agenda.

Mr. President,

The most effective protection of civilians is avoiding armed conflict in the first place – and indeed the goal to prevent armed conflict was the driving idea behind the creation of the United Nations. Preventive diplomacy, mediation and other tools can play a key role in this respect. But the United Nations Charter also makes it clear that armed conflict is in fact illegal,

except in narrowly defined exceptional cases. We view the criminalization of illegal war-making as an essential part of the conflict prevention agenda. The activation of the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over the crime of aggression on 17 July 2018 was therefore an important step forward. We encourage all States to ratify the Kampala amendments to the Rome Statute on the crime of aggression. And, we remind Council members that the possibility of referring aggression situations to the ICC is a powerful new deterrent that it has at its disposal.

I thank you.