



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT

STATEMENT BY MYRIAM OEHRI, DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE

CHARGÉE D'AFFAIRES A.I.

Madam President,

Thank you for holding this year's open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict in circumstances that unfortunately could not be timelier. Conflict continues to destroy essential infrastructure and other civilian objects and to cause extreme civilian harm. After more than a decade of war in Syria, widespread damage to water systems has left civilians with 40% less drinking water than ten years ago, and more than half of its population is suffering from hunger today. The war in Ukraine has had devastating humanitarian effects, with 1.4 million people without access to running water and an alarming increase in food insecurity not only felt by the people of Ukraine – one of the world's largest grain producers – but people around the globe. We condemn attacks against civilians and civilian objects such as hospitals, schools, apartment buildings and shelters by the Russian forces.

International humanitarian law is extremely clear that such attacks on civilian infrastructure –

carried out kinetically or with cyber weapons – are illegal. They are war crimes and must be investigated and prosecuted as such, including at the International Criminal Court, when national judiciaries are unwilling or unable to do so themselves. Liechtenstein furthermore supports Council action to address the growing impacts of conflict on infrastructure, building on Resolution 2573.

We are heartbroken and outraged that atrocities continue to be committed in conflicts around the world. But we cannot be discouraged. This tragic state of affairs requires our collective persistence to ensure accountability – through international, regional, national and hybrid regimes to bring justice to the victims of these crimes and deter their commission in the future. In this regard, Liechtenstein will continue its consistent advocacy for a comprehensive, impartial and sustainably-funded system of international justice for the most serious international crimes.

Madam President,

The Secretary-General's latest report on the protection of civilians estimates 15 million excess deaths caused by COVID-19 by the end of 2021 and illustrates the growing inequality in access to vaccines, with three billion people still to receive their first shot. Nowhere is this contrast starker than in situations of armed conflict, which damages and erodes critical infrastructure such as health services, exacerbating the impact of the pandemic.

Conflict also has a lasting effect on mental health. According to the Secretary-General's report, more than one in five people living in conflict-affected areas were estimated to suffer from

depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder. Trauma in particular is associated with the occurrence of sexual and gender-based violence, which continues to blight many conflicts. While women and girls are disproportionately affected, the pathbreaking research by All Survivors Project highlights the devastating impact of SGBV against men and boys – an often-overlooked issue – as well as the need to provide relevant assistance and support to all victims and survivors.

Madam President,

Climate change is costing lives, exacerbating vulnerabilities and inequalities, and is a driver of conflict – as well as a matter of human security itself. It is therefore of utmost importance that humanitarian action is environmentally sustainable, limiting potential damage to the planet. As an expression of our appreciation of the work by the International Committee of the Red Cross in this regard, Liechtenstein has supported the ICRC Climate and Environment Transition Fund, which will enable its transition towards sustainable and climate-smart humanitarian action in conflict. We are hopeful that other relevant actors on the ground will follow suit.

I thank you.