

**OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS  
- POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND STUDIES BRANCH -**

**Concept Paper**

**Regional Workshops on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict -  
Mainstreaming the Security Council *aide memoire* into daily decision-making  
processes pertaining to peace and security**

**Background**

The protection of civilians in armed conflict is now firmly established on the Security Council agenda. Since 1999, the Secretary General has presented two reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict to the Security Council (S/1999/957, S/2001/331). The Security Council subsequently passed resolutions 1265(1999) and 1296(2000), and presidential statements S/PRST/1999/6 and S/PRST/2002/6. The protection of civilians in armed conflict is as an umbrella concept for humanitarian policies that embraces legal, military, humanitarian assistance and human rights concerns.

OCHA has been instrumental in developing this normative and policy framework, in close collaboration with its humanitarian partners and interested Member States. As called for by the Council, we have now shifted our primary focus towards translating the protection of civilians in armed conflict into the daily work of the organization. As part of the Secretariat and as a coordinating body, OCHA is formidably placed to serve as the system-wide catalyst for concerns pertaining to the protection of civilians, and to provide analysis and expertise to the Council and departments such as DPKO and DPA during their considerations on the establishment of peace operations. By mainstreaming protection of civilian issues into the policies and decision-making processes of Member States, we hope to gradually develop the culture of protection called for by the Secretary-General.

**Establishing a “culture of protection”**

The work of the protection of civilians increased markedly over the last year. An “aide memoire” was developed for the Security Council at their request in its letter of 21 June (S/2001/614). It will serve as a checklist of issues pertaining to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, to guide the Council’s deliberations on the establishment, change or close of peacekeeping operations. Many Security Council members suggested that this *aide memoire* could be used as an operational tool in the Secretariat’s work both at head quarters and in the field. The *aide memoire* has already been used within OCHA as a key framework for diagnosis of conflict situations in Angola, and the Middle East. It also provides an extraordinary opportunity to coordinate humanitarian policies among our

core constituencies as well as to develop closer coordination with DPKO, DPA, regional organizations, Member States, NGOs and the field.

### **Regional Workshops**

*Concept:* In order to broaden the audience for protection issues and to advance the culture of protection, OCHA is planning regional workshops and training sessions on the practical application of the *aide memoire*. By specifically targeting mid-level government officials from different countries (from a given region) or regional organizations, academic institutions, and practitioners, OCHA is hoping to raise awareness of the different issues listed in the *aide memoire*, their relevance to the peace and security agenda, and prepare officials and diplomats for their involvement in the decision-making process on peace operations or cooperation with humanitarian missions.

*Organization:* The workshops are being co-organized with partners (i.e. academic or research institutions, “think tanks”) in different geographic regions in order to create local and regional ownership of the issues and ensure a continuation of the programme upon completion of the workshop. The primary purpose of the workshops is to explain the framework of protection issues involved, the policies and analysis that have been developed, and actions to be taken by Governments, international and other implementing bodies to enhance the protection of civilians. This would further help to mainstream protection issues into relevant decision-making and policy setting processes.

*Locations:* 2002: Pretoria, South Africa (15-17 October); Kobe, Japan (14-15 November), Wilton Park, U.K. (26-28 November); 2003: Africa (Northern), Latin America, Pacific Rim.

*Format:* 2-3 Day Regional workshop; Day I: Explanation of the history and meaning of the Protection of Civilians issue and the *aide memoire*; Introduction of Principles; Day II: Application in complex emergencies. Briefings to be provided by experienced practitioners and experts (i.e. ICRC, UNHCHR, UNHCR, UNICEF, OCHA) etc.); Day III: Roundtables on strategies for mainstreaming and regional recommendations for Security Council.

*Regional Participants:* Mid-level government officials and diplomats (foreign affairs, defence, home affairs) representatives of regional organizations, practitioners, academics, and NGOs.

*Outcomes:* Each workshop would provide a forum for sharing perspectives with different constituencies on protection of civilian issues; advocate and clarify the important considerations for policy makers; identify strategies for mainstreaming these into decision-making processes; foster bilateral discussions on follow-up efforts; and provide insightful findings that could be drawn upon in Security Council decisions concerning conflict situations and in the Secretary-General’s Reports on protection of civilians in armed conflict.