



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

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NEW YORK, 21 MAY 2023

SECURITY COUNCIL – OPEN DEBATE

**PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT: “25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF SCR 1265 (1999)”**

**STATEMENT BY MATTHEW EDBROOKE, POLITICAL COORDINATOR**

Mr. President,

Thank you for this opportunity to commemorate the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1265 today. Resolution 1265 marked an explicit recognition by this Council of the need to uphold International Humanitarian Law, urgently reduce civilian harm, and end armed violence. We acknowledge the central role of the ICRC in moving the Protection of Civilians Agenda forward, as well as the brave and important work of all humanitarian actors in conflict.

Thematic resolutions have further developed the PoC Agenda over the past 25 years, including by addressing emerging realities and

technologies of conflict. Today we see concerning trends in the use of artificial intelligence, lethal autonomous weapons and cyber warfare that require the careful development and application of existing legal principles and standards. Liechtenstein has contributed to this effort, including through our publication of a report on the application of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to cyberwarfare.

Mr. President,

25 years on, Liechtenstein sees the Protection of Civilians agenda in profound crisis as States prioritize military objectives at the expense of civilian welfare. Russia's ongoing aggression against Ukraine is characterized by attacks against Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure designed to terrorize the population into submission, including heinous sexual violence against both male and female victims and survivors.

The attacks by Hamas against Israeli civilians on 7 October, including

sexual violence and hostage-taking, demonstrated a callous disregard for the principle of distinction. The response by the Israeli government has inflicted yet further civilian suffering. While we commend the adoption by this Council of Resolution 2728, we deplore its lack of implementation and continue to remind all States that the resolution is binding under Article 25 of the Charter. Further action by the Security Council to protect civilians and to bring about an immediate, durable, and sustained humanitarian ceasefire is urgently needed.

Liechtenstein reiterates that all military action must strictly comply with IHL, including by respecting the principles of distinction and proportionality at all times. We strongly regret the increasingly prevalent narrative present across the region that aims to blur the distinction between combatants and civilians. Liechtenstein supports the work of the International Criminal Court, which is of vital importance for the Protection of Civilians agenda at a time when International Humanitarian

Law is routinely and at times systematically violated by conflict parties.

Mr President,

Liechtenstein is horrified by the widespread civilian harm described in the Secretary-General's report in a range of further situations including Sudan, Syria, and Myanmar. We note that the widespread use in armed conflicts of explosive weapons in populated areas is a particularly disturbing trend in the violation of International Humanitarian Law. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to sign the Political Declaration on the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, and to fully and effectively implement it.

Mr President,

A major element of Security Council Resolution 1265 is the prevention of conflicts that endanger international peace and security and, in this context, to make use of appropriate preventive measures including all

three pillars of the Responsibility to Protect. Clearly there is room for improvement in this area, for example through enhanced cooperation between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission. We hope that the Pact for the Future can take important steps forward in this direction.

I thank you.