

**Delegation from the Republic of Albania**  
*Position Paper for the Security Council*

The following topics are discussed before the Security Council (SC) in the upcoming meeting: Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security and Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict. The Republic of Albania is fully committed to a strong engagement in international peace and security, especially considering the pandemic's influences on it. Albania attaches utmost importance to the protection of civilians (POC) within peacekeeping, as well as peacebuilding. Therefore, the delegation of Albania is highly interested in discussing both above-mentioned issues and promotes international cooperation to work on solutions and adopt resolutions.

**I. Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security**

The pandemic poses a threat to all facets of peace and security efforts. Sustaining and building peace are highly affected by the pandemic's consequences. Health care systems are weakened, basic human rights are disrespected and conflicts worsen, as governments are focusing on the combat against this serious disease, allowing armed groups to gain force. Civilians and in particular vulnerable groups are suffering the most under these conditions. In order to effectively fight the impact of the pandemic on peace and security, we must think global: „This once-in-a-century pandemic has hammered home a critical lesson: when it comes to health, our destinies are intertwined.“ stated Albania's Prime Minister.

The delegation of Albania is deeply concerned with the peace and security threats imposed through COVID-19 and highly committed to fight its impacts through international solidarity and multilateralism. Therefore, Albania strongly welcomed SC resolution 2565 (2021), on the interlinks between the pandemic and peace and security, as well as the call for a global ceasefire. As a strong advocate of the guiding principle to *Leave no one behind (LNOB)*, Albania fully supported the adoption of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) resolution 74/274 on vaccine distribution, in particular pointing out to global solidarity and multilateralism. Albania is in favor of a patent waiver within the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) initiative and calls on all Member States to raise their contributions, so that no one is left behind. Successful cooperations between Member States can also include sending personnel, as Albania did in 2020 in Italy. Regional partnerships between the UN Country Teams (UNCTs) and civil society are also recommendable. The delegation of Albania furthermore considers the World Health Organization's (WHO) role as the leading one and therefore highly acknowledges the landmark GA resolution 74/270. Besides, the delegation of Albania highly welcomed the Secretary-General's (SG) proposal of a Global Fund for Social Protection (GFSP) and fully supports its implementation. It has an immense potential of filling financial gaps in the fight of COVID-19 impacts. Already being concerned with the current impacts on the international peace and security, Albania is even more worried on the future consequences it will have. In order to be prepared for the post-pandemic, the Office of the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights' (OHCHR) *Sustainable Recovery Pledge*, which Albania joined, is more than needed. Member States are invited to join and non-state actors pleased to support it.

Fighting the pandemic also means fighting its impact on peace and security. When the crisis is aggravating again, we rely on rapid action. Calling for a global ceasefire must be more effectively implemented the next time. Local actors being part of the conflict must be better addressed and not only demanded to follow the international call. UNCTs need to increase partnerships with local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and improve cooperation among non-state actors. A direct, on-eye-level communication with the conflict's parties may increase the efficiency of a global ceasefire. Further empowering the call for multilateralism, Albania calls for a patent waiver. The SC could propose the WHO and COVAX to lead a high-panel discussion, in which related Member States, NGOs and experts are especially invited to discuss concrete steps to achieve a global patent waiver. Already focusing on the post-pandemic recovery, Albania would like to highlight that protecting the planet is essential for pandemic prevention. In order to successfully cooperate in the recovery strategies, OHCHR's *Sustainable Recovery Pledge* must be expanded and its implementation supported by UNCTs. Climate, health and security are interlinked. Albania calls for an integrated One Health approach, also preventing conflict. To support the Pledge and its expansion, more financial resources are required. The GFSP could be used for this purpose. Therefore, Albania suggests the SC to cooperate with the SG to implement it rapidly. Lastly, digital technologies in the fight against COVID-19 must be mentioned. Their potential requires expanding training of digital skills and literacy. The SC can lead the important discussion of digitalization in peacekeeping and improve its use and outcome.

## II. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict

20.000 civilians died or have been injured in 2020. 18.474 were killed or injured only by explosives – thereof 56% civilians. Civilians are not members of armed forces, but still they face the biggest threats in armed conflict. Vulnerable groups are targeted even more. The POC must be a key priority in all peacekeeping mandates. Ineffective warning mechanisms and lacking efforts on prevention, have disastrous or even fatal consequences for civilians. Albania's history shows that effective international cooperation and intervention can save lives. The delegation of Albania is deeply concerned with the POC and looks forward to discussing resolutions, which improve the POC in armed conflict.

The delegation of Albania highly acknowledges the groundwork for the POC embedded in the SC resolution 1265 (1999), the *Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians*, as well as in the *4<sup>th</sup> Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War (GCIV)*. Additionally, Albania would like to underline the *Responsibility to Protect (R2P)* approach as key in peacekeeping. Being committed to R2P, Albania established a national focal point for R2P, is part of the Global Network of R2P Focal Points and supports the work of the Global Centre for the R2P. The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), UNCTs and regional offices must be highlighted for their outstanding work and the SG's Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) must be considered as the elemental financial resource for POC. Albania recently made its first contributions to the PBF and is proud to finally being able to contribute. The delegation of Albania welcomes all Member States' contributions. Aline with the LNOB agenda, Albania attaches a special focus on the protection of vulnerable groups. Women and young people are often missed out in peacekeeping, general decision-making processes and their special needs in terms of POC are not considered. For this highly reason, the delegation of Albania strongly welcomed SC resolution 1325 (2000) on the *Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS)*, as well as the *Youth, Peace and Security Agenda (YPS)*, adopted in SC resolution 2250 (2015) aline with the *UN Youth Strategy*. Having a special focus on gender-based violence (GBV) in situations of conflict, the delegation of Albania highly appreciates SC resolution 2467 (2019) and would like to mention the cooperation between UN-WOMEN and Justice Rapid Response, as a successful example of data gathering on sexual abuse cases. Albania is fully in favor of alike partnerships to improve data collection and accountability mechanisms. Moreover, Albania is convinced that the inclusion of women and the youth in decision-making processes could have tremendous impacts on the prevention of conflict. Prevention of conflict in general must be a key priority in POC and linked to the protection of human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL). Albania therefore is thankful for the Special Advisers's and Office on the Prevention of Genocide's, as well as OHCHR's important work and the adoption of GA resolution 75/277, focusing on prevention and hopefully helping to further institutionalize R2P.

Although many resolutions were adopted on the POC, there are still dying thousands of civilians in armed conflict. The UN system needs more rapid action and effective mechanisms. First of all, the PBC must be empowered in its leading role to oversee and guide the UN approaches to sustain peace and the synergies between the PBC, SC and OHCHR must be increased. This would guarantee more effective cooperation within the UN system, working on conflict prevention and sustaining peace. Additionally, the PBF's budget must be increased, allowing for more resources. Besides, Member States need to cope with their commitments. Secondly, international peace and security concerns require more partnerships between UN-inside and outside-actors. Regional cooperation between UN regional offices, UNCTs, private sector and civil society, have a huge potential to widen needed experience and expertise resources. Thirdly, women and young people must be considered in peacekeeping. Preconceiving women in decision-making, could be achieved through mandatory gender mainstreaming in all peacekeeping operations' mandates. To create more accountability and effective law mechanisms against GBV, Albania suggests the SC to propose to UN-Women working on more partnerships as the above-mentioned. Collecting more reliable data, is essential for bringing perpetrators to justice. Giving a voice to young people positively influences conflict prevention. In order to achieve their full inclusion in decision-making, the PBC, SC and OHCHR are invited to create a youth engagement platform on security and peace. This platform could obtain financial resources from the PBF and voluntary donations from Member States. In order to improve existing R2P structures, Albania would like to encourage all Member States to establish a national focal point and participate in the Global Network of R2P Focal Points to profit from sharing best practices. The SC could cooperate with the Global Centre for the R2P, giving support to those Member States who are willing to establish a national focal point but do not have sufficient expertise in doing so. An increased synergy between the PBC, SC and OHCHR is also needed for more effective early-warning plans and mechanisms. Lastly, Albania would like to reaffirm the urgent necessity to work on solutions to protect all civilians.