

Delegation from the United Arab Emirates
Position Paper for the *United Nations Security Council*

The topic on the agenda of the United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) are I. Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security and II. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) recognizes the defeating of the COVID19 and protecting of civilians in armed conflict as significant matters of maintaining of peace and security and is delighted to contribute on these crucial issues.

I. Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security

Covid19 affects everyday life all around the planet and makes the task to keep peace and security even harder. Quoting the UN Secretary-General (SG) António Guterres "the pandemic also poses a significant threat to the maintenance of international peace and security – potentially leading to an increase in social unrest and violence that would greatly undermine our ability to fight the disease". At the beginning of the pandemic, on 23 March 2020 the SG made an urgent appeal for a global ceasefire to concentrate the efforts to defeat COVID19. In response to Guterres' "Appeal for Global Ceasefire," the SC adopted the resolution S/RES/2532 on 1 July 2020. The resolution demanded "a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda". UAE belonged to the first five countries that endorsed the appeal. We noted that the ceasefire has a great potential to limit the spread and impact of the disease. The reason is the improvement of the humanitarian situation.

We see health and security as intertwined parts affecting each other. Therefore, we highly support the SC resolution 2565 (2021) calling for international cooperation to facilitate equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines in armed conflict and post-conflict situations, and during complex humanitarian emergencies. Since the pandemic, we are putting efforts into defeating COVID19 not only on a national level by providing free testing and treatment for our citizens, residents, and visitors. On the international level, we have endeavored by bilaterally delivering more than 1,000 tons of medical supplies to over 50 partnering countries, many of which have security issues.

While the Governments are seeking to defeat the pandemic's consequences, some terrorist groups are misusing these hard times to destabilize the situation for instance in the Sahel region. UAE itself has witnessed the cruel terrorist attacks on our civilians caused by the fire of ballistic missiles and explosive-laden drones launched by the terrorist group Houthis. The UAE called the UN and the Member States (MS) for a holistic approach to sustain and foster peace and security in face of COVID19. We pledged for the enhanced coordination of the UN system putting an accent on the Resident Coordinators that have the best expertise on development, humanitarian aid, peace, and security. The UN gave a very strong response to COVID19. In June 2020, the SG has launched the UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19 (Saving Lives, Protecting Societies, Recovering Better) that was updated September 2020 and December 2021. For the moment UAE sees the most urgent task in overcoming the pandemic and conflict prevention. The outbreaking of the new armed conflicts will worsen the situation with COVID19 and exceed the capacities of the UN system. For better ensuring of security and peace during COVID19 we call upon the MS of the SC to condemn the conflict actors that haven't kept to the appeal to the ceasefire. As the resolution S/RES/2532 hasn't been implemented properly, we suggest issuing a second appeal to the ceasefire that would start in one month from this day on and should last for at least 6 months to concentrate on the defeat pandemic and cope with a new threat by the new variants as delta and omicron. Therefore, the SC must keep monitoring and reporting those conflict parties continuing any armed conflicts. For those, we must consider sanctions as stricter enforcement of an arms embargo and maritime blockade and restrictions on providing assets to designated persons or entities as a very helpful tool for supporting peace and security. The sanctions should be carefully conceived and implemented so that they do not impact humanitarian actors in providing necessary aid. Accordingly, we suggest considering humanitarian aspects in every sanction design: The sanctions must not to influence the civil population and not to hinder work of the humanitarian actors and peacekeeping mission. The implementation of sanctions has to be constantly evaluated. Moreover, we do need to enhance our capacities to be able to respond to the terrorist attacks launched by non-state actors (NSAs), make them accountable, and bring them to justice. Another important thing is that the citizens living in the conflict-affected areas and countries do not have access to the vaccine against COVID19. Therefore, we urge the SC to cooperate with the World Health Organization (WHO) and humanitarian actors in the matters of delivering of the vaccination and humanitarian aid by involving the peacekeeping missions to support the implementation of the Comprehensive Response. Furthermore, UAE would be honoured to allocate the capacities of Dubai's International Humanitarian City to enhance the response to COVID19 on the regional level.

II. Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts

Civilians have been suffering from armed military conflicts due to mines, improvised explosive devices, and explosive remnants of war, but also destroyed infrastructures. According to the *Report of the Secretary-General Protection of civilians in armed conflict 2021*, over 99 million people in 23 states faced acute food insecurity driven by armed conflict. The UAE is deeply concerned and hopes that all efforts can be taken to ensure the protection of civilians (PoC) in armed conflicts. The animosities of the Second World War led to the adoption on 12 August 1949 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which was ratified by almost all MS and territories. This and the previous Geneva conventions with their additional protocols are the major part of international humanitarian law that seek a humanitarian approach to limit the effects of armed conflict. Further regulations as the UN Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict (1972) first recognized women and children as the most vulnerable members of the population who “are too often the victims of inhuman acts and consequently suffer serious harm”. UAE has actively supported the endeavors done to protect civilians in armed conflicts. The PoC in armed conflicts has been a topic of discussion on the international level. Since 1999 the SC added PoC to its agenda and therefore recognized it as a matter of international peace and security. Since then, SC adopted multiple resolutions on this issue: the resolution S/RES/1265 adopted 1999 was the first resolution that condemned “the deliberate targeting of civilians in situations of armed conflict as well as attacks on objects protected under international law and calls on all parties to put an end to such practices”. Since then, the PoC mandate was implemented in peacekeeping contexts. Nowadays more than 95 % of UN Peacekeeping missions seek for preventive protection of civilians but also are largely involved in actions of physical PoC. The following resolutions condemned all violence against humanitarian and UN and associated personnel, journalists, and media professionals, on those involved in humanitarian operations and on health care workers. Further resolutions as S/RES/2150 (2014) called the MS upon to prevent any developments that could lead to genocide, the S/RES/2417 (2018) convicted the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, by the resolution S/RES/2573 (2021) SC reviled attacks on civilian infrastructure in conflict. Plenty of UN bodies and organizations were created to facilitate humanitarian aid to civilians in armed conflicts. Established by the GA/RES/46/182 (1991), the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs was set up to coordinate the humanitarian actors together and therewith to ensure the response to emergencies. The same resolution stemmed mandate of the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), that is considered as the senior UN official committed to humanitarian affairs. ERC works together with the SG and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee that establishes common humanitarian principles and shapes the policies and strategies to provide the necessary humanitarian aid. UAE has shown a great commitment to this issue by providing medical aid to the 50 states, among them to those suffering from armed conflicts. Cooperating with WHO Dubai’s International Humanitarian City managed to deliver critical medical equipment to affected people worldwide. In cooperation with the World Food Programme, we have established an international air bridge of food supply that makes it possible to life-saving cargo where it is the most needed. In November 2021 we hosted a second Partnered Military Operations workshop on PoC as well as civilian-owned assets in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that brought together more than 30 senior military officers from 24 different countries. We do show a huge engagement in the initiatives that disrupt the financing of terrorist groups since those NSAs as Houthis are a great danger to UAE civilians. Those terrorist organizations are targeting the urban infrastructure with a dense population which causes lots of casualties. As urbanization is increasing, we encourage SC to enhance the PoC and the work of humanitarian aid organizations and peacekeeping missions in densely populated urban centers also taking care of the essential infrastructure. Therefore, we must mobilize and adapt all the facilities we have in order to counter the danger coming from NSAs actors. The beginning has been made by the SC resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325 (2016) that addressed the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) by terrorist groups. In order to enhance the PoC and prevent possible terrorist attacks we call upon the SC to work on a comprehensive definition of WMD including in this definition the ballistic missiles, as they can carry either nuclear or conventional warheads. Further, we urge the SC to condemn the attacks from the terrorist groups on the densely populated urban centers and enhance the PoC in urban warfare by Peacekeeping missions by providing special training and strengthening the cooperation with other humanitarian actors. The destruction of the infrastructure in the densely populated cities hinders access to the medical treatment and food supply required. The most vulnerable groups are women and girls. Therefore, we see the need to increase the number and capabilities of female peacekeepers in peacekeeping missions. In December 2021, we launched the training program with an estimated budget of 10 million USD for the 200 women appointed by the MS governments, at Khawla Bint Al-Azwar Military School for 4 years. Due to this experience, we would be honored to share our expertise and provide the necessary donations for the training on PoC in urban warfare for female peacekeepers, as we believe that peace and security can only be sustainable if it is inclusive.