
PROTECTING TRANSLATORS
AND INTERPRETERS WORLDWIDE



**Draft UN Resolution
for the Protection of Civilian Translators/Interpreters in Conflict Situations¹**

Proposed by:

Red T (non-profit organization for the protection of translators and interpreters in high-risk settings)
International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)
International Federation of Translators (FIT)
International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters (IAPTI)
Critical Link International (CLI – International Council for the Development of Community Interpreting)
World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI)

Reviewed by: Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP

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“The Security Council,

“Bearing in mind its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, and underlining the importance of taking measures aimed at conflict prevention and resolution,

“Reaffirming its resolutions 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1674 (2006) and 1738 (2006) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and its resolution 1502 (2003) on the protection of United Nations personnel, associated personnel and humanitarian personnel in conflict zones, as well as other relevant resolutions and presidential statements,

“Reaffirming its commitment to the Purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as set out in Article 1 (1-4) of the Charter, and to the Principles of the Charter as set out in Article 2 (1-7) of the Charter, including its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States, and respect for the sovereignty of all States,

¹ This draft is based on, inter alia, UNSC Resolution 1738 (2006), General Assembly Resolution A/RES/68/163 (2013), and the UN Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity (2012).

“Reaffirming its commitment to the Purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as set out in Article 1 (1-4) of the Charter, and to the Principles of the Charter as set out in Article 2 (1-7) of the Charter, including its commitment to the principles of the political independence, sovereign equality and territorial integrity of all States, and respect for the sovereignty of all States,

“Reaffirming that parties to an armed conflict bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of affected civilians,

“Recalling the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, in particular the Third Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949 relative to the treatment of prisoners of war, in particular article 4.A.4,

“Emphasizing that there are existing prohibitions under international humanitarian law against attacks intentionally directed against civilians, as such, which in situations of armed conflict constitute war crimes, and recalling the need for States to end impunity for such criminal acts,

“Recalling that the States Parties to the Geneva Conventions have an obligation to search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed a grave breach of these Conventions, and an obligation to try them before their own courts, regardless of their nationality, or may hand them over for trial to another concerned State provided this State has made out a prima facie case against the said persons,

“Drawing the attention of all States to the full range of justice and reconciliation mechanisms, including national, international and ‘mixed’ criminal courts and tribunals and truth and reconciliation commissions, and noting that such mechanisms can promote not only individual responsibility for serious crimes, but also peace, truth, reconciliation and the rights of the victims,

“Deeply concerned at the frequency of acts of violence in many parts of the world against translators/interpreters in armed conflict, in particular deliberate attacks in violation of international humanitarian law,

“Recognizing that the consideration of the issue of protection of translators/interpreters in armed conflict by the Security Council is based on the urgency and importance of this issue, and recognizing the valuable role that the Secretary-General can play in providing more information on this issue,

“1. Condemns intentional attacks against translators/interpreters in situations of armed conflict, and calls upon all parties to put an end to such practices;

“2. Recalls in this regard that translators/interpreters engaged in dangerous professional missions in areas of armed conflict shall be considered as civilians and shall be respected and protected as such, provided that they take no action adversely affecting their status as civilians. This is without prejudice to the right of linguistic contractors working for the armed forces to the status of prisoners of war provided for in article 4.A.4 of the Third Geneva Convention;

- “3. Reaffirms its condemnation of all incitements to violence against civilians in situations of armed conflict, further reaffirms the need to bring to justice, in accordance with applicable international law, individuals who incite such violence, and indicates its willingness, when authorizing missions, to consider, where appropriate, steps in response to crimes against humanity and serious violations of international humanitarian law;
- “4. Recalls its demand that all parties to an armed conflict comply fully with the obligations applicable to them under international law related to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, including translators/interpreters;
- “5. Urges States and all other parties to an armed conflict to do their utmost to prevent violations of international humanitarian law against civilians, including translators/interpreters;
- “6. Emphasizes the responsibility of States to comply with the relevant obligations under international law to end impunity and to prosecute those responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law;
- “7. Urges all parties involved in situations of armed conflict to respect the professional independence and rights of translators/interpreters;
- “8. Recalls that the deliberate targeting of civilians and other protected persons, and the commission of systematic, flagrant and widespread violations of international humanitarian and human rights law in situations of armed conflict may constitute a threat to international peace and security, and reaffirms in this regard its readiness to consider such situations and, where necessary, to adopt appropriate steps;
- “9. Invites States which have not yet done so to consider becoming parties to the Additional Protocols I and II of 1977 to the Geneva Conventions at the earliest possible date;
- “10. Affirms that it will address the issue of protection of translators/interpreters in armed conflict strictly under the agenda item ‘protection of civilians in armed conflict’;
- “11. Requests the Secretary-General to include as a sub-item in future reports on the protection of civilians in armed conflict the issue of the safety and security of translators/interpreters;
- “12. Directs the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in consultation with relevant entities of the United Nations system and with the assistance of appropriate expertise, to draft a plan of action on the issue of protecting the safety and security of translators/interpreters in armed conflict and to submit a finalized plan of action to the Secretary-General by [month/year];
- “13. Invites the relevant agencies, organizations, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to consider identifying focal points for the exchange of information about the implementation of the plan of action following its adoption, in cooperation with Member States and under the overall coordination of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.”