

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>
S/PV.8571 11 July 2019	Briefing by Security Council mission to Iraq and Kuwait (27 to 30 June 2019)	Letter dated 27 June 2019 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/533) (No report issued)	Iraq	Three Council members (Kuwait, Russian Federation, United States), invitee
S/PV.8580 19 July 2019	Briefing by Security Council mission to Colombia (11 to 14 July 2019)	Letter dated 10 July 2019 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/557) Report of the Security Council mission to the Republic of Colombia, 11–14 July 2019 (S/2019/827)		Two Council members (Peru, United Kingdom)
S/2019/825	Security Council mission to Ethiopia and South Sudan (19 to 23 October 2019)	(No meeting was held and no report issued)		

34. The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security

During the period under review, the Council held three meetings, including two high-level meetings, and issued one presidential statement in connection with the item entitled “The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security”. Two of the meetings took the form of briefings under the sub-item entitled “International humanitarian law”, while the third meeting was convened for the adoption of a decision.⁶³⁵ More information about the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.

Deliberations in the Council in 2019 under this item were focused on the connection between the implementation of international humanitarian law and the safeguarding of the humanitarian space in conflict situations, as well as on how to ensure the implementation of and respect for international humanitarian law in contemporary protracted and complex conflicts, on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949. In that regard, Council members emphasized the role of the Council in ensuring compliance with and preventing violations of international humanitarian law, the need to strengthen the law to address the challenges in modern conflict,

and the importance of building capacity and awareness among State and non-State actors to ensure implementation and accountability. With respect to humanitarian action, speakers noted the need to avoid the politicization of assistance and its delivery in accordance with humanitarian principles and respect for national sovereignty.

On 1 April 2019, the Council held its first meeting under the item since 21 February 2014 and heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a Professor of Practice at Harvard Law School.⁶³⁶ The Under-Secretary-General stated that ensuring greater respect for international humanitarian law was one of the most effective ways to safeguard the humanitarian space and called for the promotion of policies and practices to strengthen adherence to the law and ensure the broadening and deepening of understanding and acceptance of existing rules. He noted that Council members and Member States should enable humanitarian and medical activities through coordination and advocacy for humanitarian access, the protection of medical care, and by minimizing the

⁶³⁵ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁶³⁶ See [S/PV.8499](#). For more information on the meetings held in 2014, see [S/PV.7113](#); [S/PV.7115](#); and *Repertoire, Supplement 2014–2015*, part I, sect. 36.

impact of sanctions and counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian action. The Under-Secretary-General added that States needed to do much better in terms of holding individuals to account for serious violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross indicated that the space for impartial humanitarian action was under threat due to the disregard for human dignity, the questioning of the applicability of the law and the politization of humanitarian aid for political gain or the control of populations. He referred to complex challenges in modern conflict such as terrorism, and sanctions regimes and counter-terrorism measures which were hindering the delivery of neutral and impartial humanitarian action. He called on States to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and for hostilities to be conducted in a manner that protected civilians, with respect for the basic principles of distinction, precaution and proportionality. The Professor of Practice at Harvard Law School focused on the importance of ensuring that counter-terrorism measures, including measures adopted by the Council, did not inhibit the principled humanitarian action foreseen in, or required by, international humanitarian law, and on the steps that the Council could take to further safeguard humanitarian action and strengthen compliance with international humanitarian law. In that regard, she urged the Council to guard against overly broad and vague notions of what constituted unlawful support to terrorism, to ensure that none of the activities underlying principled humanitarian action formed part or all of the basis for subjecting individuals or entities to sanctions, to urgently consider comprehensive exemptions for principled humanitarian action, and to uphold respect for legal protections for principled humanitarian action.

On 13 August 2019, at the initiative of Poland, which held the Presidency for the month,⁶³⁷ the Council held a briefing on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the signing of the Geneva Conventions and heard statements by the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a representative of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights.⁶³⁸ In his remarks, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the Council played a crucial role in ensuring respect for international

humanitarian law and that the United Nations, including its peacekeepers, were both obligated to respect and were protected under international humanitarian law. In that connection, he appealed to the Council and Member States to further reflect on ways to ensure that attacks against peacekeepers were properly investigated and, where appropriate, prosecuted.

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross acknowledged that international humanitarian law remained a key tool for States to deal with contemporary challenges of conflict, including counter-terrorism operations in armed conflict, and offered concrete examples of its positive impact. That notwithstanding, he stated that efforts to ensure respect for international humanitarian law were inadequate and called on States to watch over their legal responsibilities and take practical steps for ambitious and thorough interpretation of the law, underscoring the need to constantly reflect on the meaning and development of the law to meet the challenges of warfare today and in the future. The representative of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights called for the mainstreaming of international humanitarian law and the finding of new ways to ensure its implementation. She also underscored the importance of non-State actors' ownership of humanitarian norms and the benefits of peer pressure among States to ensure the implementation of such norms.

On 20 August 2019, the Council issued a presidential statement reaffirming the fundamental importance of the Geneva Conventions for the protection of those affected by armed conflict, on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of their signing.⁶³⁹ The Council recalled its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and the need to promote respect for the rules and principles of international humanitarian law.⁶⁴⁰ The Council encouraged States to comply with their international humanitarian law obligations and reaffirmed its strong condemnation of violations in that regard.⁶⁴¹ In particular, the Council expressed serious concern and condemned violations such as indiscriminate attacks targeting civilians and civilian objects such as schools, the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, the unlawful denial of access to humanitarian assistance and humanitarian personnel, and attacks on medical and humanitarian

⁶³⁷ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 5 August 2019 (S/2019/629).

⁶³⁸ See S/PV.8596.

⁶³⁹ S/PRST/2019/8, first paragraph.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid., second and third paragraphs.

personnel and medical facilities.⁶⁴² The Council recalled that States parties to the Geneva Conventions had an obligation to try persons alleged to have committed a grave breach of the Conventions before

⁶⁴² Ibid., third paragraph.

their own courts or, if that State party preferred, to hand them over for trial to another State party concerned.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴³ Ibid., fourth paragraph.

Meetings: the promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8499 1 April 2019	International humanitarian law			Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Professor of Practice at Harvard Law School	All Council members, ^a all invitees	
S/PV.8596 13 August 2019	International humanitarian law Letter dated 5 August 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/629)			Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel, President of ICRC, representative of the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights	13 Council members, ^b all invitees ^c	
S/PV.8599 20 August 2019						S/PRST/2019/8

^a France was represented by its Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs; Germany (President of the Council) was represented by its Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs; Kuwait was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs; and Poland was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

^b Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, the Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea), United Kingdom and United States. Germany was represented by its Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs; and Poland (President of the Council) was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

^c The President of ICRC participated in the meeting by videoconference from Geneva.

35. Items relating to non-proliferation

A. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting in relation to the item entitled “Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”. The meeting took the form of a briefing.⁶⁴⁴ More information on the meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.

On 19 March 2019, the Council heard a briefing by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).⁶⁴⁵ The Chair focused on the progress made by Member States in implementing resolution 1540 (2004) and the outcome of the 2016 comprehensive review, including resolution 2325 (2016). He stressed that since the adoption of resolution 1540 (2004), significant progress had been made towards its implementation. Nevertheless, he noted that the Council, in its resolution 2325 (2016), had recognized that the full and effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) was a long-term task that would require continuous efforts at the national, regional and international levels. As at 19 March 2019, 182 countries had submitted initial reports providing the Committee with information on the measures they had taken, or planned to take, to comply with their obligations under the resolution. He informed the Council that he had sent letters to non-reporting States seeking their first reports, as well as notes verbales to reporting States requesting up-to-date information to assist the Committee in its preparations for the next comprehensive review.

He emphasized the importance of taking practical steps at the national level to implement the resolution

by continuing to develop national implementation action plans, as encouraged in paragraph 5 of resolution 2325 (2016), and of exchanging information among Member States and establishing national points of contact. He recalled that, in accordance with paragraph 3 of resolution 1977 (2011), the Council had decided to conduct a comprehensive review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) prior to the expiry of the Committee’s mandate in April 2021. In that regard, the Committee had been mandated to include, if necessary, recommendations on adjustments to its mandate and to submit to the Council a report on the conclusions of the review. He informed the Council that the Committee had begun its preparatory work for the upcoming comprehensive review. The Chair also expressed concern over the ongoing financial challenges affecting the United Nations and stressed that if the situation was not remedied before the end of April 2019, the Committee would face serious challenges in meeting its obligations to the Council and realizing the activities agreed upon under its current programme of work. After the briefing, Council members emphasized the importance of implementing resolution 1540 (2004), expressed support for the comprehensive review and underlined the significance of the Committee’s role in assisting States to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their access by non-State actors.

In 2019, the Council also heard a briefing by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) under a separate item of the agenda, entitled “Briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council”.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴⁴ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁶⁴⁵ See [S/PV.8487](#).

⁶⁴⁶ See [S/PV.8528](#). For more details, see part I, sect. 32.