



Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8599th meeting of the Security Council, held on 20 August 2019, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, the treaties which were drafted and adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War, reaffirms the fundamental importance of the Geneva Conventions for the protection of those affected by armed conflict. The Security Council recalls its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, and in this context, the need to promote respect for the rules and principles of international humanitarian law, including with respect to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, as well as to address underlying root causes of armed conflicts through dialogue, mediation, consultations and political negotiations.

"The Security Council recalls the obligation of States Parties to the 1949 Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocol I of 1977 to respect and ensure respect for these instruments in all circumstances and welcomes the continuing contribution of the International Committee of the Red Cross to States' efforts to implement international humanitarian law. The Security Council recognizes that the 1949 Geneva Conventions, in particular Common Article 3 applicable to non-international armed conflicts, the Additional Protocols thereto, and other rules of international humanitarian law, as applicable, when complied with, provide significant protection to those affected by armed conflict. The Security Council further recognizes and encourages continued efforts of States to comply with their international humanitarian law obligations. The Security Council also stresses the importance of existing national, regional and international mechanisms for training, legal advice, technical support and exchange of information, as well as capacity building of States Parties, upon request of national authorities, to the implementation of international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong condemnation of violations of international humanitarian law committed by all parties to armed conflict, as well as violations and abuses of international human rights law, as applicable, and calls upon all parties to comply with their legal obligations. The Security Council recalls the importance of ensuring compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, ending impunity for



violations and abuses, and ensuring accountability. The Security Council expresses its serious concern regarding those situations where international humanitarian law is not being adhered to, including through indiscriminate attacks or attacks targeting civilians and civilian objects such as schools. The Security Council also condemns other violations of international humanitarian law, including the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, unlawful denial of access to humanitarian assistance and humanitarian personnel, and attacks on medical personnel and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties, hospitals, and other medical facilities entitled to protection under international humanitarian law.

“The Security Council recalls that 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 if that State Party prefers, may hand them over for trial to another State Party concerned, provided that State has made out a prima facie case against the said persons.

“The Security Council urges States which have not yet done so to consider becoming parties, at the earliest possible date, to the Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions, and to take appropriate steps to implement their obligations under these instruments.”
