



UNITED NATIONS  
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Security Council meeting

Statement

by

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Under Secretary General for Legal Affairs and  
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Security Council Chamber

Thank you, Mr. President.

I would like to thank the Security Council for inviting me to this meeting.

Just over 70 years ago, on 11 August 1949, a Diplomatic Conference convened in Geneva adopted the four Geneva Conventions, and, on the following day, its Final Act was signed by the participating States.

The four Conventions entered into force around a year later, on 21 October 1950, and have been at the core of international humanitarian law ever since.





of a humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights”.

In this regard, it is not surprising that international humanitarian law has become one of the most important areas of international law that guide the work of the Organization today, including the Security Council.

The role of the United Nations in situations of serious violations of international humanitarian law has also been specifically recognized in Article 89 of Protocol I Additional to the Geneva Conventions, which requires that High Contracting Parties act, jointly or individually, in cooperation with the United Nations in situations of serious violations of the Geneva Conventions and of the Pro

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In practice, all competent principal organs of the United Nations have dealt with issues related to international humanitarian law in one way or another. As far as the Security Council is concerned, it has, on several occasions, recalled “its primary responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, and in this contexth.6(e)p8.5(5(t 3.1(te)12.1 [(l)3.7o





- x Authorizing the establishment of commissions of inquiry to investigate alleged violations of international humanitarian law;
- x Mandating peacekeeping operations to protect civilians, particularly in the context of ongoing armed conflicts, including by the use of force;
- x Authorizing humanitarian agencies to carry out cross-border humanitarian assistance pursuant to a binding decision of the Council;
- x Requesting the Secretary-General, his special representatives and envoys, peacekeeping operations and special political missions to monitor potential violations of international humanitarian law in ongoing conflicts;
- x Requesting the Secretary-General to report on certain thematic areas, such as the protection of civilians in armed conflict, children in armed conflict, and the protection of medical and humanitarian personnel exclusively engaged in medical duties; and
- x Imposing sanctions on individuals and entities involved in violations of applicable international humanitarian law.

The breadth of actions taken by the Security Council shows that the Council has great potential and flexibility for ensuring respect for international humanitarian law.

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While the United Nations has a role in ensuring respect for international humanitarian law by others, it is, at the same time, an entity to which international



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x Providing guidance to the mission so that military operations are carried

