



Security Council

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Letter dated 19 July 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Following my previous letter dated 5 July 2019 ([S/2019/586](#)) transmitting the informal summary of the Security Council open debate on the theme “Protection of civilians in armed conflict”, I also have the honour to share the summary of other events held by Member States on the sidelines of the open debate (see annex).

The document provides a brief summary of the discussions, as captured by organizers of the events. It does not necessarily reflect the views of organizers, co-sponsors and panellists of each event.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Ambassador



Annex to the letter dated 19 July 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Summary of other events held by Member States on 21, 22 and 24 May, on the sidelines of the Security Council open debate on the theme “Protection of civilians in armed conflict”

The present document provides a brief summary of the discussions, as captured by the organizers. It does not necessarily reflect the views of organizers, co-sponsors and panellists of each side event.

1. Prioritizing the protection of civilians: policy, practice and priorities for the future of the protection of civilians agenda on the occasion of its twentieth anniversary

During the side event, organized by the Permanent Missions of Indonesia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Center for Civilians in Conflict, participants reflected on developments in the protection of civilians in armed conflict agenda since the matter was first taken up by the Security Council 20 years ago and the challenges that remained for the way forward. Participants identified positive developments in the legal framework on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, but gaps in the practical implementation thereof. Key challenges remain in the areas of accountability for the conduct of hostilities, especially in urban areas, and the development of national strategies, for example, with regard to the training of armed forces. Participants agreed that the Council must be more holistic in its approach and consistent in prioritizing the protection of civilians across all matters of which the Council is seized.

The panel was comprised of Jonathan Allen, Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations; Mohammad K. Koba, Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations; Ursula Mueller, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator; and Sahr Muhammedally, Director for the Middle East and North Africa and South Asia regions at the Center for Civilians in Conflict. It was moderated by Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations.

2. Enhancing the implementation of Council resolution 2417 (2018): lessons learned from the past year

During the side event, participants looked back on the first year of implementation of resolution 2417 (2018) on conflict and hunger and assessed the way forward. Participants considered the response to the food crisis in both South Sudan and Yemen as good examples of how the United Nations can effectively prompt the Council to act when there is an imminent threat of famine. Participants suggested different options for building further on the resolution, including through the development of a toolkit consisting of different policy options for Council members to use when they are confronted with conflict-related food crises. Participants also suggested taking further action on the criminalization of starvation as a method of warfare by expanding the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court to also include starvation as a crime in non-international armed conflicts. Participants pointed to the need for Member States to minimize the impact of security measures on food security, including by taking steps to mitigate the adverse effects of sanctions and counter-terrorism measures on humanitarian access.

3. Gender and genocide: engendering analysis for better prevention, accountability and protection

The International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect and the Global Justice Center organized a panel discussion on 22 May on the theme “Gender and genocide: engendering analysis for better prevention, accountability and protection”, with the aim to establish a direct link between gender and atrocity crimes. The event expanded upon the report of the Global Justice Center entitled “Beyond killing: gender, genocide and obligations under international law”, which was focused on the unique ways in which women experience and are affected by genocidal violence. In the discussion, examples were provided of how a better incorporation of gender-based warning signs could have prevented the atrocities against the Rohingya and of how gender is used in committing genocidal acts, on the basis of perceived gender roles in a community, to further demoralize that community, as was the case for the Yazidi people. The examples were supported by findings of the Global Justice Center, including an international failure to properly account for gender-based mechanisms in prevention and protection by the international community, and were framed within the work and mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

The goal of the event was to raise awareness around the need for the inclusion of a gendered analysis to shed light on the multidimensional nature of atrocity crimes in order to better prevent their occurrence, as a lack of gender-specificity in legal frameworks prevents the international community from effectively preventing atrocity crimes and punishing those responsible.

The panel was comprised of Razia Sultana, Founder and Chair of the Rohingya Women Welfare Society; Grant L. Shubin of the Global Justice Center; Jocelyn Getgen Kestenbaum, Professor at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law; and Juliette Lehner of the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide. It was moderated by Abigail Ruane, Director of the Women, Peace and Security programme of the Women’s International League of Peace and Freedom.

4. Twenty years of protecting civilians through United Nations peacekeeping operations: successes, challenges and new frontiers

The side event was jointly organized by the Permanent Missions of the Netherlands and Uruguay to the United Nations, the Center for Civilians in Conflict and the International Peace Institute.

Karel van Oosterom, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, delivered opening remarks. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, delivered the keynote address, followed by a panel with remarks from Bintou Keita, Assistant Secretary-General for Africa of the Departments of Peace Operations and of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; David Gressly, Deputy Special Representative for Operations and Rule of Law of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Lieutenant Commander Marcia Braga, former Military Gender and Protection Adviser of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; and Alison Giffen, Director of the Peacekeeping Programme of the Center for Civilians in Conflict. Elbio Rosselli, Permanent Representative of Uruguay to the United Nations, delivered concluding remarks. Namie Di Razza, Senior Fellow at the International Peace Institute, moderated the discussion.

Participants took stock of the conceptual and practical evolution of the protection of civilians through United Nations peacekeeping operations on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the first explicit mandate on the subject. Speakers reflected on efforts to strengthen the protection of civilians throughout the peacekeeping operations, including through recent reform initiatives and steps taken in the field as part of such operations. Speakers set out the specific individual and collective actions that need to be taken today and over the next 20 years by the range of peacekeeping stakeholders to strengthen the protection of civilians through such operations. Speakers noted that the matter was both an important achievement and a critical challenge in peacekeeping contexts, and highlighted the need for additional resources, more comprehensive mandates and continued support from host countries and Member States, and the Security Council in particular, to ensure the effective protection of civilians.

The resulting key messages and recommendations are set out below:

(a) The objective of protecting civilians grew out of the failure to prevent massive violence and atrocity crimes. Those experiences and other recent examples reaffirm that civilians and communities expect protection from United Nations peacekeeping operations, whether or not the operations have explicit mandates in that regard. The protection of civilians should therefore be prioritized in all components of peacekeeping operations and pursued in a comprehensive, integrated and multidimensional manner;

(b) There must be increased financial and political support to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations can succeed in delivering on their mandates. Member States must provide peacekeeping missions with adequate resources and capabilities to make the protection of civilians an achievable result and to better align their engagement with the Security Council and the General Assembly;

(c) There is a need to improve and expand training on the protection of civilians, as well as specific training on gender and child protection, for civilian, military and police peacekeepers. Enhancing performance and strengthening accountability in all mission components and the Secretariat are also essential to strengthen the implementation of protection of civilian mandates;

(d) Promoting and expanding the inclusion of women in United Nations peacekeeping operations, including in leadership and substantive roles, are essential in implementing protection of civilian mandates, including in building trust and engaging with local populations. Conflict and threat assessments conducted as part of the operations also need to be done in a gender-sensitive manner;

(e) The Secretariat and peacekeeping operations should explore new avenues to enhance protection and prevention, such as through innovations and good practices in early warning and threat assessments, community engagement, and public information and strategic communication, as well as through the use of new technologies, including for peacekeeping intelligence.

5. The gendered and child-specific impact of explosive weapons use on women and children in populated areas in Yemen

During the side event, participants looked at the specific impact of the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects on women and boys and girls in the context of Yemen. Two female civil society representatives from Yemen provided first-hand examples of the harm that the use of such weapons inflicts on individuals and communities. Speakers also discussed the disproportionate impact on women, who face additional care burdens, social stigma and more limited access to support, as well as the unique vulnerabilities of children to the use of such weapons and how first

respondents can better treat children affected by blasts, through the presentation of a manual on the paediatric treatment of such injuries. Participants also suggested the need to adopt a political declaration on avoiding or at least reducing the use of such weapons in populated areas.

6. Finding the road to implementing Council resolution 2286 (2016)

The side event was jointly organized by the Permanent Missions of Afghanistan, France, Germany, Iraq and Poland to the United Nations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, the World Health Organization and the International Peace Institute.

The speakers included Joanna Wronecka, Permanent Representative of Poland to the United Nations; Anne Gueguen, Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations; Adela Raz, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan to the United Nations; Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom, Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations; Christoph Heusgen, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations; Leonard Rubenstein, Chair of the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition; and Hansjoerg Strohmeyer, Chief of the Policy Development and Studies Branch of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

In 2016, the Council adopted resolution 2286 (2016), a landmark resolution in which the Council reaffirmed the relevance of international humanitarian law and, in particular, its rules relating to the protection of the wounded and sick. The adoption of the resolution represented a strong political commitment to protect the sanctity of health-care delivery in armed conflict. Since then, although the protection of medical care in armed conflict has received sustained attention by the Council, it has yet to translate into significant and concrete change on the ground. As described by Mr. Bahr Aluloom, attacks on medical facilities continue to be a challenge in Iraq and have a huge impact on the civilian population. Participants recalled the necessity, in armed conflict, for parties to armed conflict to comply fully with relevant international humanitarian law obligations, the need to take concrete action, at the national, regional and global levels, to stem the attacks and other impediments to the impartial provision of medical care in armed conflict, and the need to hold perpetrators of attacks accountable. Participants also highlighted good practices in the implementation of the resolution and identified ways in which Member States and relevant institutions can concretely follow up on initiatives to better protect the wounded and sick in armed conflict.

The resulting key messages and recommendations are set out below:

(a) There is a need for efforts at the national level to find context-specific solutions. In Afghanistan, for example, the country's national security strategy now includes strict guidelines to avoid unintended consequences on medical missions and the civilian population, and the Ministry of Health is actively engaging with security forces on those issues. However, three years after the adoption of the resolution, there have been only a few isolated cases of leadership at the national level. More can be done through legislative reform, changes in military doctrine and training, the engagement of ministries of health and the restriction of arms sales to entities that attack health-care facilities and personnel, and by ensuring adequate and thorough investigations and robust accountability;

(b) There also has to be a "quantum leap" in the international community's collective efforts to ensure that attacks on and impediments to medical missions do not become the new normal. Training of combatants and engagement with armed groups are crucial for both those groups to understand their obligations under

international humanitarian law, specifically in relation to medical missions. Diplomatic and other tools must be used to promote adherence to international law;

(c) The Council continues to have a central role to play, in particular in ensuring that investigations are conducted and in strengthening accountability. Active efforts must be made to combat impunity by insisting on having an impartial, independent and prompt investigation of every incident.

7. Journalism on the front line: the protection of journalists and media professionals in conflict environments

In advance of the world's first ministerial conference on media freedom, held in London on 10 and 11 July, the Permanent Missions of Canada, Ghana and the United Kingdom to the United Nations co-hosted a meeting on 24 May on the protection of journalists and media professionals in conflict environments. Freedom of expression and freedom of the press are essential to strengthening peace and democracy and require a safe and enabling environment. However, the world is becoming an increasingly hostile place for journalists, with at least 99 journalists killed worldwide and almost 350 detained in 2018. Chaired by Karen Pierce, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom to the United Nations, the meeting brought together Member States, representatives of United Nations agencies and members of civil society organizations and the press to discuss challenges faced by journalists in conflict settings. Participants also explored how the United Nations and other partners can assist Member States in implementing national actions to protect journalists and promote media freedom in conflict situations.

Marie Paule Roudil, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Representative to the United Nations and Director of the UNESCO Liaison Office in New York, noted that impunity for crimes against journalists remained the largest obstacle to ensuring their safety. She highlighted concrete initiatives that UNESCO is undertaking on the protection of journalists, including the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. Endorsed in 2012, the Plan of Action is increasingly being used in a number of countries as a means to assist them in preventing attacks, protecting journalists and prosecuting violators.

Frederick Ameyaw, Head of Information at the Permanent Mission of Ghana to the United Nations, expressed appreciation to the United Kingdom and the 17 other Member States of the Group of Friends for the Protection of Journalists for their efforts to draw attention to the need to protect media professionals. He also highlighted the importance of a culturally sensitive approach in initiatives that aim to cultivate public appreciation for the "right to report".

Carole Landry, United Nations correspondent for Agence France-Presse, suggested that efforts to promote the protection of journalists should focus on addressing the drivers and enablers of hostility to the media, noting that political leaders were denouncing journalism and labelling articles that reflected the views of the opposition as "fake news", and that, as a result of the making of journalism into the public enemy, it was harder for foreign bureaus to protect their journalists. Ms. Landry and Maria Salazar Ferro, Director of Emergencies for the Committee to Protect Journalists, highlighted the importance of specialized training for journalists and editors reporting in conflict zones. Ms. Ferro further stressed that journalists must be proactive in ensuring their own safety, but noted that freelance journalists and local media professionals often had difficulty gaining access to proper training.

During the discussion segment of the meeting, questions were raised about the technical definition of a journalist. Ms. Ferro said that anyone committing an act of journalism should be recognized as a journalist. The Plan of Action states that "the

protection of journalists should not be limited to those formally recognized as journalists, but should cover others, including community media workers and citizen journalists and others who may be using new media as a means of reaching their audiences”.

Panellists and attendees also noted that the challenges facing journalists varied greatly, depending on aspects of their identity and the medium they used. For example, female journalists working in conflict zones might be particularly vulnerable to threats of violence, intimidation or sexual harassment, while local, freelance and citizen journalists might have more difficulty in gaining access to opportunities for assistance and training. Online harassment also contributed to hostile environments for journalists and should be included in initiatives of Member States to protect journalists. Ms. Ferro stressed the importance of the involvement of technology companies in addressing online harassment.

While the meeting was focused on journalism in conflict areas, Ms. Pierce noted that journalism everywhere, whether in developed or developing countries, or in peacetime or conflict settings, appeared to be under attack. In his closing remarks, Richard Arbeiter, co-host and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, highlighted the implementation gap in the protection of journalists and emphasized the importance of publicly condemning acts of intimidation, hostility or violence against journalists. He noted that the conference in July would present an opportunity to raise the visibility of the issue and increase the political cost for attacks on journalists. To mobilize sustained attention, Canada had already announced that it would host the next conference on the issue in 2020.

8. Protecting civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas

The side event on protecting civilians from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas was co-convened by the Permanent Missions of Austria, Chile, Costa Rica, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway and the Philippines to the United Nations, together with the International Network on Explosive Weapons.

The panel covered the widespread direct and long-term humanitarian harm resulting from the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. It also touched upon regional commitments, such as the Santiago communiqué and the Maputo communiqué. Panellists also discussed the development of new international standards and the Secretary-General’s call for a political declaration. In addition, the Deputy Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations provided information on the upcoming international conference on protecting civilians in urban warfare, to be held in Vienna on 1 and 2 October 2019.

In the session for questions and answers, States and civil society representatives discussed, among other things, what they considered as critical elements for a political declaration, highlighting elements such as capacity-building, respect for international humanitarian law, assistance for victims and a call for concrete commitments.

9. Promoting the implementation of the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes, as elaborated by the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group

The side event was focused on the promotion and implementation of the Code of Conduct regarding Security Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes. The panellists from Belgium, Sweden and Kuwait shared a number of insights from their experience as Council members. The discussion developed around plausible strategies to improve the Council’s response to mass atrocity situations and restore its credibility in that regard. Proposals were made to

increase the political cost associated with blocking action by the Council, in particular the use of the veto power, for example by leveraging the power of the General Assembly, where the Code of Conduct enjoys the strong cross-regional support of 119 States, and to ensure that the 10 elected members act more in unison. Wrap-up meetings, informal Arria-formula meetings and open debates provide important opportunities for all Member States to engage with the Council. In addition, it was proposed that the Assembly should be convened automatically when the Council is blocked by veto. The panellists also discussed the need to improve the Council's early warning capacity, including by using informal formats in a more effective manner to discuss situations pre-emptively and working in collaboration with the Secretary-General on early warning briefings. The central role of civil society in promoting the Code of Conduct and holding the Council accountable was also underlined.

10. The human rights compliance framework of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel

The side event was jointly organized by the Permanent Missions of Belgium, Burkina Faso and France to the United Nations, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the International Peace Institute.

The speakers included Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations; Yemdaogo Eric Tiare, Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso to the United Nations; Sheraz Gasri, Legal Counsellor and Head of Human Rights, Humanitarian and Influence Affairs at the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations; Colonel Dia Saidou, Military Attaché to the Permanent Mission of Mauritania to the United Nations; Richard Gowan, United Nations Director of the International Crisis Group; Georgette Gagnon, Director of the Field Operations and Technical Cooperation Division of OHCHR; Andrew Gilmour, Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and Head of OHCHR in New York; and Baptiste Martin, Senior Human Rights Officer and Coordinator of the Group of Five for the Sahel project of OHCHR. The discussion was moderated by Ms. Di Razza, Senior Fellow at the International Peace Institute.

The Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel was established in 2017 by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger to unite their efforts to address common security threats in the region, including terrorism, transnational organized crime and human trafficking. In Council resolution [2391 \(2017\)](#), in which the Council authorized the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali to provide operational and logistical support to the Force, the Council called upon those five States to establish a robust compliance framework to prevent, investigate, address and publicly report violations and abuses of human rights law and violations of international humanitarian law related to the Force. The event was an opportunity for participants to discuss in more depth the modalities and implementation of the compliance framework of the Force and explore its nuances, while reflecting on the potential for such a model to contribute to the protection of civilians in the Sahel region.

The resulting key messages and recommendations are set out below:

(a) Adherence to the human rights compliance framework by the Force is critical to preventing civilian harm and building the required trust in the Force among the populations affected by military operations. As part of the framework, it is particularly important to establish human rights and the protection of civilians as central considerations in the conduct of counter-terrorism operations;

(b) In addition to protection dividends, the compliance framework approach can provide operational dividends to the Force. Retaining and sustaining the support of civilian operations is essential to the success of military operations;

(c) A trained police component and proper judicial follow-up to complement military action are essential for reinforcing accountability. Clear and dependable communication is also important to ensure positive perceptions of the Force among the populations;

(d) Engaging in a constructive dialogue with the defence and security forces can help to incentivize them to comply with human rights standards;

(e) Given the increasing complexity of peace operations, the compliance framework model can serve as an important tool going forward, in helping to maintain common standards in conflict management efforts and to maintain a clear prioritization of human rights and the protection of civilians.
