

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 20 May 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you the attached national statement of the United Kingdom in response to the briefing of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) (see annex).

I would be most grateful if you would circulate the present letter and its annex as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Jonathan Allen
Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom
of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 20 May 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

National statement of the United Kingdom in response to the briefing of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004)*

The United Kingdom would like to thank the Indonesian Permanent Representative and his colleagues for their hard work in chairing the Committee over the last year and during these challenging times. The achievements of the Committee in reducing the number of non-reporting States and increasing engagement from member States is in large part due to Ambassador Djani's commitment in raising the profile of the resolution. The United Kingdom also extends its warm thanks to the Expert Group of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), who have engaged with many member States to extend understanding of the resolution and to support strengthened implementation.

It feels like a very different time from January when the United Kingdom invited colleagues from the Committee and experts from the United Nations and other international organizations to travel to the United Kingdom to discuss the future of resolution 1540 (2004). What was evident then was the enduring importance of resolution 1540 (2004) and clear enthusiasm and support to ensure the resolution remains fit for purpose. There was an equal desire to ensure that implementation is supported by a Committee that can link States who request assistance with the support that they need.

In its sixteenth year, the United Kingdom believes that resolution 1540 (2004) remains an essential component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture that protects all States from the use by non-State actors of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and the means of delivery of these weapons. Much has changed since 2004, when the resolution was first adopted by unanimous vote. The threat has not receded, it has evolved. The United Kingdom remains concerned about use of crude toxin weapons by non-State actors. Foiled attacks which would have employed toxins, including using ricin as a weapon, and repeated calls by Daesh-badged media for followers to use chemical and biological weapons highlight the evolving challenge faced by law and customs enforcement agencies.

The events of this year throw into sharp relief the need for common understanding of shared threats, and how strengthening the preparedness of individual States strengthens the global community. That is why this year is particularly significant for 1540 as the resolution comes under comprehensive review. The resolution requires all States to take certain actions, and, equally, it is important that all States have a reasonable opportunity to contribute fully to the review and to share their concerns. The United Kingdom will work constructively with other members of the Committee to achieve this as far as is possible.

The United Kingdom believes a successful review will also achieve three things.

- Firstly, due consideration should be given to the scope of the resolution itself, to ensure that the requirements it places upon States remain relevant to both emerging weapons of mass destruction threats, including the proliferation of their means of delivery, and evolving practices by non-State groups.

* The present statement is provided as would have been delivered in the Security Council.

- **Secondly, the mandate of the Committee and its Expert Group should be examined to ensure that mandated activity is appropriate to meet the scope of the resolution.**
- Lastly, the effectiveness and working practices of the Committee should be considered to ensure that the mandate is implemented as effectively as possible.

Once the review is complete, the United Kingdom looks forward to engaging constructively with other States to draft a new mandate for the Committee, drawing on the results of the comprehensive review.

Challenging though the current circumstances are, they also present a learning opportunity. The spread of threats around the world that do not respect national borders require proactive responses and solidarity between States. The success of resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#) is contingent on each State choosing to take action domestically. Each State that does so is effectively strengthening the immune system of the international community against the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction.

In this vein, the United Kingdom hopes that the comprehensive review will focus on assistance, ensuring that those States that choose to seek support in implementing the resolution receive the comprehensive and effective assistance they need and expect. The United Kingdom thanks colleagues in the French Mission for the work they have contributed to the Committee by leading on this important issue. For its part, the United Kingdom stands ready to provide legal and regulatory expertise as well as broader support to States looking to meet their obligations and strengthen their national regulatory frameworks, including their ability to implement their laws and regulations governing chemical, nuclear and biological activities.

Constraints forced upon all States by current circumstances present new opportunities, and we hope that our increased reliance upon remote working can be employed to enable the Expert Group to provide States which request assistance with more flexible and informal support.

Further to resolution [1540 \(2004\)](#), the United Kingdom wishes to take this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to other key elements of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, which are also critical to maintaining international security, including the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BTWC) and the various multilateral export control regimes.