United Nations S/PV.7244

Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7244th meeting
Tuesday, 19 August 2014, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Sir Mark Lyall Grant	(United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Mangaral
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Lamek
	Jordan	Mr. Hmoud
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaitė
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Sarki
	Republic of Korea	Mr. Oh Joon
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Rwanda	Mr. Nduhungirehe
	United States of America	Mr. Dunn

Agenda

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

World Humanitarian Day

Letter dated 5 August 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/571)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506. Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

14-51036 (E)

Accessible document Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

World Humanitarian Day

Letter dated 5 August 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2014/571)

The President: In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Peter Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Mr. Masood Karokhail, Director and co-founder of The Liaison Office.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Maurer, who is joining today's meeting via video-teleconference from Geneva.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2014/571, which contains the text of a letter dated 5 August 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting a concept note on the item under consideration.

I wish to warmly welcome the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, and I now give him the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: I would like to thank the President of the Security Council for this initiative to mark World Humanitarian Day with a briefing on the protection of humanitarian workers. The subject is critical to mobilizing awareness and action and to improving our response to people caught in conflicts and disaster.

World Humanitarian Day commemorates the bombing of the United Nations premises at the Canal Hotel in Baghdad on 19 August 2003. It is dedicated to the memory of all staff members and partners who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty for the humanitarian imperative. Since then, we have seen shocking tragedies and terrorist acts against United Nations personnel and premises in places such as Algeria, Nigeria, Somalia and Afghanistan. Those appalling incidents remain fresh in our minds.

Humanitarian workers from the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, international organizations and non-governmental organizations dedicate their lives to assisting millions of women, children and men affected by conflicts and natural disasters around the world. Working in some of the most dangerous places, they take great risks to help people in desperate need.

Yet all too frequently their safety is compromised in the most despicable ways: by threats, by attacks and by the use of illegal methods of warfare that endanger lives or damage the infrastructure needed for the delivery of assistance. Such acts are part of the picture of brutalization that we see in the world today. Parties to conflict very often ignore international humanitarian law and target civilians for the sake of political and military gains. They have used collective punishment. They have incited ethnic violence. They have impeded the delivery of humanitarian assistance. And they have attacked humanitarian actors. What that represents is nothing less than a deficit of humanity. Regretfully, that trend is getting worse, rather than better.

Last year more humanitarian workers were kidnapped, seriously injured or killed than ever before: 155 were reportedly killed, 171 were wounded and 134 kidnapped. That represents a 66 per cent per cent increase in relation to 2012. Thus far in 2014, 79 humanitarian workers have been killed, 33 wounded and 50 kidnapped, according to the preliminary figures available at this stage. In Somalia alone, over a dozen humanitarian staff were kidnapped or detained during the first quarter of 2014. In recent weeks, several humanitarian workers have been killed in South Sudan and Gaza.

The consequences of those crimes are felt not only by humanitarian workers and their families, but also by the millions of people who cannot be reached when assistance is sabotaged by violence. They are felt by the children who do not get vaccinated. They are felt by the sick and wounded who go untreated. And they are felt by those forced from their homes and left without shelter.

In recent years, the majority of incidents have taken place in six countries, namely, Afghanistan, Pakistan,

Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. The overwhelming majority of victims are national humanitarian staff working to save the lives of their own people.

As we mourn those losses and recall the plight of the many wounded or kidnapped, we must not accept such outcomes as the necessary cost of operating in risky environments. Our shared responsibility is to do everything we can to provide humanitarians with the safety and the space they need to do their life-saving work.

It is essential not to politicize humanitarian action and to make a clear distinction between humanitarian actors and political or military actors. That distinction is important, even when the military objective is the protection of civilians. If those lines are blurred, perceptions of humanitarian organizations can change quickly and radically and further expose them to violence. For that reason, political and military actors must respect the need for humanitarian actors to carry out their work in an impartial, neutral and independent manner. Dialogue on how best to maintain that distinction or strike that balance is an ongoing endeavour.

To misuse humanitarian action for political, military and security ends is dangerous. That compromises the integrity of humanitarian operations and can place the lives of humanitarian workers and the people they assist in grave danger. Respect for the humanitarian principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence is crucial for building acceptance by parties to conflict and affected communities. That must include preserving the ability of humanitarian workers to engage with all parties to conflict. Such engagement serves humanitarian purposes. I want to stress that it does not confer legal status or political legitimacy to non-State groups. In that area, where humanitarian action is urgently needed in conflict situations, the Security Council has a clear role to play. That is why we particularly appreciate the fact that you have organized this briefing, Mr. President. I would suggest that four actions are especially important.

First, the Council can routinely call on parties to conflict to uphold their legal obligations and condemn parties when they do not. Secondly, the Council can ensure that measures to safeguard peace and security, such as the negotiation of peace agreements or the deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations, do not blur the lines between political, military and humanitarian objectives. Humanitarian efforts, essential as they are, are no substitute for political action to resolve the causes of conflicts. Thirdly, the Council can impose targeted measures against parties to conflict who violate their obligations to respect and protect humanitarian workers and the civilian population. Fourthly, the Council can use all the tools at its disposal to seek accountability for those who perpetrate attacks against humanitarian workers and assets. That means supporting investigations and prosecutions at the national level, creating special criminal tribunals or mixed arrangements, making use of commissions of inquiry and fact-finding missions and referring relevant situations to the International Criminal Court. Let us remember that those who commit such crimes take the civilian population hostage and consciously spread fear and use intimidation to reach their goals. They must never be allowed to succeed.

I would like to conclude by stressing that attacks against humanitarian workers and facilities are part of a deeply disturbing trend, as I mentioned earlier. I am thinking here of the increase in unacceptable and cowardly attacks against civilians in armed conflict and the sadly growing lack of respect for international humanitarian law. Let us not accept the growing deficit of humanity; rather, let us stop it.

Today, on World Humanitarian Day, let us honour the victims, let us protect the heroes on the front lines of disaster and war, and let us do everything we can to help them and to help us all to alleviate human suffering in a difficult time of turmoil and violence in the world.

The President: I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Maurer.

Mr. Maurer: I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to address the Council during this crucial discussion.

As President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), I represent 13,000 individuals, many of whom are working in volatile and dangerous environments. Their safety is a constant concern. As a leader of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, I am particularly aware of the terrible risks that hundreds of thousands of volunteers take to help people in need. Sadly, violence and threats of violence against humanitarian workers know no borders, colours or religion. They are wildly indiscriminate and affect us all, regardless of whether we work for the United

Nations, the Red Cross or a local non-governmental organization.

Humanitarian work is by definition dependent on those who do it: no workers, no aid. The equation is simple, but that simplicity conceals the most complex and difficult task facing humanitarian organizations working in violence-prone environments today. That task is to reach the people in need while guaranteeing the safety of the personnel of those organizations. No effective action is possible without allowing humanitarian personnel to go about their work and actively ensuring their safety.

Working in armed conflict environments has always been dangerous, and always will be. Today, however, some of the inherent dangers are being exacerbated by the sheer number of high-risk combat zones in which organizations like ours are active. There have been dramatic changes, such as the security constraints under which humanitarian workers have to operate. While conflicts may not necessarily be more violent than in the past, workers are more exposed. The fragmentation of armed groups — many of which have unclear command structures — the easy availability of small arms, the intertwining of a variety of motives and the outsourcing of security tasks to private military and security companies are all realities that have changed the environment in which we operate.

The resurgence of religious fundamentalism and the spreading of terror and violence, fuelled or aided by new and far-reaching social media, have brought new figures to the fore, and they are redrafting the rules to fit their shifting agendas.

As a result of such changes, what we euphemistically call security incidents have been multiplying. Because of the risks involved, the number of organizations able, allowed or willing to work in conflict environments has shrunk dramatically over the past decade. That means that calls for humanitarian action are ever less likely to be answered. The negative perception that some individuals and groups have of humanitarian action — and the deliberate attacks against humanitarian workers that result — is a problem that the international community must address head-on. Solutions do indeed exist. Let me mention a few of the elementary points that must be accepted and acted on if humanitarian workers are to carry out their duties effectively and in safety.

First and foremost, it is important to remind ourselves that protecting humanitarian workers in armed-conflict environments is an obligation under international humanitarian law. States and non-State actors must respect and protect humanitarian personnel, as well as objects used exclusively for humanitarian operations. That obligation, applicable in both international and non-international armed conflict, is absolute. Not only is this the unavoidable duty of the actual parties to the conflict, but all States have a collective responsibility to uphold that rule, as they do to ensure respect for humanitarian law as a whole.

Secondly, the blurring of the line between military, political and humanitarian activities poses a real threat to humanitarian action and humanitarian workers. With their determination to work in close proximity to the people they are striving to help, humanitarian workers depend on being — and on being perceived to be — neutral and impartial. Any attempt to exploit humanitarian aid, or to mix together humanitarian goals and political agendas, automatically increases the risk of being perceived with hostility and of creating dangers for humanitarian personnel on the ground.

Looking at the majority of the crises today, what is missing is strong political will to protect humanitarian workers and to respect the principles according to which they operate, thus ensuring a separate scope for humanitarian action. That is imperative, whatever parallel efforts are under way to find political solutions to a conflict. Humanitarian action must not serve as a fig leaf for political inaction. That is a burden that humanitarian workers cannot be expected to shoulder.

My third point is that security is intimately linked to acceptance. Without those two things, humanitarian workers find it extremely difficult to safely reach people in need and provide impartial aid and protection. Acceptance depends on the ability of humanitarian organizations to engage with local communities and others. That means speaking with armed non-State actors about humanitarian law and principles and obtaining unambiguous and adequate security guarantees. Through extensive networking at all levels and through constant dialogue with all parties concerned, the International Committee of the Red Cross aims to ensure a safer working environment for its staff. That is our main strategy. We call it a threat-reduction strategy, and we implement it by dealing with local contacts who control the level of threat to which our operations are exposed. Those entities must understand our objectives and the exclusively humanitarian purpose of our actions.

At a more basic level, it is important to mention that security management requires humanitarian organizations to adopt professional standards and training in this area. Different organizations use different models. Some, such as those of the United Nations system, adopt a more centralized approach in which headquarters plays a significant role. Others, such as the ICRC, follow a more decentralized approach in which decision-making is mainly delegated to the field. No matter the model applied, what counts is a willingness to seek the best combination for improving the safety of humanitarian workers.

I would like to mention here the Health Care in Danger initiative led by the ICRC over the past two and a half years. It has generated compelling information on the threats facing health-care workers, many of whom are humanitarian volunteers and staff. After studying some of the riskiest situations — such as crossing checkpoints, emergency evacuations and the deployment of troops next to health facilities — we have made recommendations to armed entities, lawmakers, health authorities, ambulance providers and many more. The ICRC and the World Health Organization will co-organize an event on health care and violence during the General Assembly session this fall, and we hope that many States, including the members of the Security Council, will be present to discuss this important subject.

Another ICRC initiative I would briefly like to mention is what we call the Safer Access Framework. This framework involved broad consultations with over 50 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on how best to identify and meet the challenges they face in ensuring operational access and acceptance at all times. The aim of this initiative is to increase the ability of National Societies to deliver assistance while at the same time reducing the risks facing staff and volunteers.

Recent attacks on humanitarian organizations by both non-State entities and Government forces demonstrate that aid organizations are not always targeted because of faulty perceptions of their roles and responsibilities; sometimes such targeting is part of a carefully plotted political and military strategy. Those attacks are deliberate, and the perpetrators will not be deterred by well-crafted explanations of humanitarian mandates or by security procedures. For an organization like the ICRC, finding a way to respond to such manifestations of hostility can be an insurmountable challenge, for they threaten its very operational model and its ability to reach communities. The States and other parties to conflict must rally in great numbers to put an end to those practices.

The current political environment has sore need of impartial organizations that conduct strictly humanitarian activities. Members of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement are committed to standing by people in need during armed conflict and other situations of violence. We are determined to live up to the following principle: the only side taken by the Red Cross and Red Crescent is the side of the victims.

Protecting the lives of humanitarian workers is not the responsibility of any specific country; it is the responsibility of all nations and communities, stemming from a truly universal value. It deserves the full attention that it is receiving in the Security Council today.

The President: I thank Mr. Maurer for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Karokhail.

Mr. Karokhail: Thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to address the Security Council about the situation in Afghanistan, especially the impact of insecurity on local humanitarian workers — a risk they share with the vulnerable communities they assist.

As the Council knows, the conflict in Afghanistan is growing more intense. The recent spike in violence — such as a car bomb in south-eastern Afghanistan that killed at least 89 civilians in July — provides little confidence that the security situation will improve any time soon. The year 2013 saw a 14 per cent increase in civilian casualties over the previous year, the highest number of civilian deaths and injuries since 2001. That presents a complex reality for Afghan civilians, as they are increasingly targeted directly or caught in the cross-fire. At risk too are humanitarian and development workers, who stand on the front line with the vulnerable communities they assist. Afghanistan has been called the world's most dangerous place for aid workers.

In this briefing, I wish to highlight four key points: the impact of violence on Afghan aid workers, the transfer of risk to local staff from international organizations, the need to better protect local staff, and what can be done to improve the situation.

First, Afghan humanitarian workers bear the brunt of violence, regardless of whom they work for. Afghanistan has seen the highest number of casualties among humanitarian workers in the world, almost four times more than neighbouring Pakistan. Since 2001, 895 aid workers have been attacked, including 325 killed, 253 wounded and 317 kidnapped. Last year was the most violent year to date for humanitarian workers.

Those headline figures, however, say little about who is affected. For the most part, Afghan nationals have borne the brunt of insecurity. Afghan aid workers account for 88 per cent of those killed, 89 per cent of those wounded and 89 per cent of those kidnapped. And that does not tell the whole story: many local organizations do not report attacks on their staff, thus the real numbers are likely to be much higher. For example, in 2008 four of my organization's staff were kidnapped in Paktika province, in Afghanistan's contested south-east, and another staff member was killed negotiating their release. We did not make the incident public, out of respect for the wishes of the families to keep the incident private. Other local organizations have confirmed similar practices. Statistics tell us only part of the story about violence against local humanitarian workers on the front line in Afghanistan.

Secondly, Afghan humanitarian workers suffer heavy casualties in part because international organizations are using local staff and local organizations to reduce their own security risk. Attacks on aid workers disproportionately affect national staff. For example, 85 per cent of United Nations staff involved in security incidents are Afghans; for international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), it is 76 per cent. That signals that there are different values for local humanitarian workers in Afghanistan, especially those working for the United Nations.

Furthermore, the security arrangements of international NGOs and the United Nations often make local humanitarian organizations less secure. As security measures applied to protect international staff are tightened and their mobility is restricted, the risk to national staff is increased. Local staff take on more responsibility for accessing dangerous areas while international staff remain in compounds.

Communities and, by association, the insurgency have great difficulty in distinguishing among different organizations working on the ground. They associate aid organizations with the international presence of the International Security Assistance Force troops and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and view all of them as a legitimate target. The fact that offices of many aid organizations, including the United Nations, increasingly resemble military bunkers with armed guards, and that usually Afghan police are used for field escorts, adversely impacts the security of local staff and organizations for which they work. The perception of humanitarian organizations as neutral or impartial in Afghanistan has greatly diminished both for national and international organizations. That has proven very costly in terms of Afghan lives.

Thirdly, the protection of Afghan humanitarian staff is a complex issue that is not adequately addressed. Afghans are expected to take greater risks than their international counterparts in most organizations, simply because their nationality is assumed to give them some protection. That is no longer the case in Afghanistan. Just because organizations are local does not mean that they are not vulnerable. The responsibility for humanitarian response continues to be pushed onto the vulnerable communities we seek to assist.

Local humanitarian workers rarely receive the same security arrangements as their international colleagues. That inequality exploits the reliance of many Afghans on employment opportunities within the humanitarian sector, and many have been forced to accept dangerous assignments simply to feed their families.

While the value of life is hard to measure, it is difficult to be told by an international funder — as my organization was in 2008 — that the possible death of our staff is not budgeted for. That is especially the case when international organizations subcontract to local organizations to decrease the risk to their own international staff. The implicit message that the lives of Afghan staff are not only worth less but are also expendable is difficult to stomach.

We all know that the future will hold more violence in Afghanistan. The conflict is increasingly complex, with aid workers having to deal with a patchwork of insurgents, localized armed groups and criminal gangs. International organizations and NGOs will continue to see their operating space reduced, and the burden to deliver assistance will continue to shift to Afghans.

I wish to conclude by suggesting what the United Nations and the Security Council could do to improve the protection of local humanitarian workers.

First, protection and equality start with monitoring the risk, not just for international but also for local staff and aid organizations.

Secondly, there is a need to remove the artificial hierarchy between international and local staff in protracted situations such as that in Afghanistan. Rather than using funds to create a bunkerization of international aid agencies, the assistance community could increase its partnership with national organizations. That, however, should not mean transferring all the risk or responsibility to local organizations. It should also improve their protection.

Thirdly, access needs to be negotiated not on an ad hoc basis, but collectively. The United Nations should take the lead in that regard. The time has come to openly speak to all parties in the conflict and negotiate clear access principles. Despite several initiatives to discuss access — including an NGO-led effort supported by the Swiss Government, in which my organization is also involved — actual negotiations are done individually and on an ad hoc basis. There is an urgent need to develop uniform principles for transparent and open access negotiations, regardless whether the organizations are local or international.

Fourthly, the Security Council must bring to account the perpetrators who commit crimes against aid workers.

Afghan organizations understand that they will increasingly be asked to provide assistance where international organizations no longer can. Many stand ready to shoulder that burden. But the international community must do more to protect them and enable them to protect themselves. That includes capacity-building, empowering them to provide assistance to all in need and providing adequate funding mechanisms that allow them to mitigate the risks. We can no longer maintain the status quo, where local aid workers put their lives on the line in order to get the job done.

Thank you, Mr. President, for allowing me to share the views of local organizations with the Council on this very important matter.

The President: I thank Mr. Karokhail for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

In accordance with provisions of the note S/2010/507, which encourages both members and non-members of the Council to deliver their statements in five minutes or less, it is our intention to use the flashing light on the collar of the speaker's microphone to indicate when the five minutes have elapsed. I strongly encourage members of the Council to conclude their remarks promptly once the five minutes have elapsed.

Ms. Lucas (Luxembourg) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, Mr. President, allow me to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for having organized this briefing on the protection of humanitarian workers in armed conflict. I would also like to thank the speakers for their briefings. The situation they describe should command our attention.

While the needs do not cease to grow, the deployment of humanitarian actors is increasingly hindered by the threats to their security. The figures speak for themselves. The year 2013 represented a new peak, with 251 attacks and 155 humanitarian workers killed. That is the highest number of victims in the past 10 years. Unfortunately, initial information for 2014 does not indicate any improvement. While it is still several months until the end of the year, the number of humanitarian workers killed already exceeds, as the Deputy Secretary-General just stated, the number of violent deaths recorded in 2012.

The primary responsibility for the protection of humanitarian workers falls on the host country. Yet very often in conflict situations, the authorities have neither the means nor the willingness to fulfil that role. To that we have to add the proliferation of non-State armed groups.

The partners of humanitarian actors must be aware of that situation and provide them the resources and flexibility required to adapt their planning to the constraints imposed by the security conditions. It is also important that those who have information on threats to security share it as much as possible with the actors on the ground, including non-governmental actors, since they are often in the front lines facing those threats. The United Nations initiative Saving Lives Together is an example of good practice in that regard. In our view, such initiatives should be continued and strengthened.

In 2003, following the attack on the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad, the Security Council adopted the seminal resolution 1502 (2003). Since then, in many other Council decisions concerning country situations or thematic issues, the imperative to protect humanitarian workers has rightly been taken into account. That mainstreaming effort must continue.

Given the evolution of the operational environment, given the growth of insecurity, we believe it is time

to review resolution 1502 (2003), to try to reflect developments since its adoption — their causes and consequences — and to define the role of the Security Council in that context. We believe such a discussion should take into account the growing recognition that international peacekeeping efforts must go hand in hand with an improvement in the humanitarian situation of civilian populations in zones of armed conflict and that unmet humanitarian needs could contribute to further destabilizing already fragile situations. However, the need to break the vicious circle of violence and deprivation should not have the perverse effect of diverting humanitarian assistance from its main goal and manipulating it for political purposes.

Humanitarian action can never replace political action. The situation in Syria makes that only too clear. At the same time, people under siege cannot wait for a political solution to be found. They need humanitarian assistance, to which they are entitled by virtue of the most basic humanitarian principles codified in international humanitarian law.

Adopted in the context of the Baghdad attack, resolution 1502 (2003) clearly recalls, in its fifth preambular paragraph, that

> "there are existing prohibitions under international law against attacks knowingly and intentionally directed against personnel involved in a humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping mission undertaken in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations which in situations of armed conflicts constitute war crimes",

and recalls "the need for States to end impunity for such criminal acts".

Mention of the protection of humanitarian aid workers leads inevitably to the matter of respect for international humanitarian law, and the tools at our disposal to combat impunity in that connection for those found guilty of violating that law. We stand with those who believe that the Security Council must take full responsibility in that regard, by virtue of the powers vested in it on that issue, whether that requires commissions of inquiry, sanctions regimes or referral to the International Criminal Court.

Today, on World Humanitarian Day, we honour the memory of all those who have paid with their lives for their commitment to the most vulnerable among us, We pay homage to the thousands of humanitarian workers who, day after day, prove their remarkable devotion and courage by bringing aid and assistance to populations in need. We owe all possible assistance and protection to those humanitarian heroes. Any initiative in that regard can count on Luxembourg's unconditional support.

Mrs. Perceval (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): On World Humanitarian Day, I would like to thank the United Kingdom for convening this debate and for its concept note (S/2014/571, annex). We also acknowledge the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Maurer and Mr. Karokhail and thank them for their participation.

I would also like to honour all the humanitarian workers of the United Nations, of the International Committee of the Red Cross and of the many other organizations that render service in areas of conflict in order to assist the victims. I would like especially to pay homage, with respect and admiration, to Sergio Vieira de Mello, and with him to all the humanitarian personnel who have lost their lives in this service.

For years, in his reports on this issue, the Secretary-General has noted that the status of the protection of civilians in armed conflict remains deplorable. At the same time, deliberate attacks against humanitarian personnel have become commonplace. Beginning with the Baghdad attack in 2003, attacks on humanitarian workers have continued in alarming numbers. Over the past decades, there has been a troubling increase in the number of abductions. Violations of the special protection that humanitarian workers enjoy under international humanitarian law have also become commonplace, from South Sudan to Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria and other situations that have come before the Council.

International humanitarian law protects civilians from the effects of armed conflicts through basic institutions. One of those is the principle of distinction, which is the basic norm of the obligation of combatants. That principle also protects civilian installations such as schools.

Another basic institution is the special protection conferred on those who provide assistance to civilians and the wounded. Therefore, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their 1977 Protocols and customary international humanitarian law include humanitarian personnel among specially protected subjects. International humanitarian law also protects the means by which such assistance is provided, given that for the protection of victims there must be adequate personnel and means, including medical and other facilities and

means of transportation. All those are fundamental to the survival of civilians, including the wounded. Humanitarian personnel are also indirectly protected as an integral part of the civilian population, which is protected by virtue of the basic principle of distinction between civilians and combatants.

Despite that protection, just as civilians in situations of armed conflict are increasingly exposed to deliberate armed attacks and other forms of violence — such as violence against women, sexual and gender-based violence, intimidation, kidnapping, harassment and illegal detention — the participants in humanitarian operations are also exposed to such attacks. Acts of aggression against humanitarian convoys and the destruction and looting of the goods they are transporting have become common.

In the light of that, the United Nations, including the Security Council, must continue its commitment to the protection of civilians in areas of armed conflict and to the protection of humanitarian personnel. With that in mind, Argentina believes that a series of measures deserves consideration.

First, there must be greater effort to promote full respect for international law, particularly for humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law. That was one of the issues emphasized during the open debate organized by Argentina in August 2013 (see S/PV.7019), and it continues to be a basic challenge of protection.

Secondly, the Secretary-General should be requested, pursuant to the spirit of resolution 1502 (2003), to inform Member States and the Security Council of attacks against United Nations personnel and to propose measures to improve their safety. He should also be asked to invite the International Committee of the Red Cross and other humanitarian organizations to contribute information on such attacks.

Thirdly, the Council needs to continue to strengthen its commitment to the investigation of facts and its tireless fight against impunity for grave violations of international humanitarian law, including against humanitarian personnel, which constitute crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

To conclude, I would also like to stress that the parties to a conflict should make all the necessary efforts to guarantee effective and timely access to humanitarian action, including shipments and equipment. In some regions of the world, the only way to assure humanitarian access is by includinig mandates to protect civilians in peacekeeping operations. I want to stress the basic norm that failure on the part of one side to comply with the obligations imposed by international humanitarian law does not justify violations by the other. We need to learn to embody and to reinvent that which is most human in the name of a more just and less violent world. That which is a self-evident responsibility for us is, for the victims, a necessity.

Finally, on World Humanitarian Day, I would like once again to express our solidarity with the victims of armed conflict and to pay tribute to the humanitarian personnel who daily express and embody the words of the philosopher of modernity who said that good works more effectively in the shadows than in broad daylight.

Mr. Nduhungirehe (Rwanda): I thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing this timely and relevant briefing. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peter Maurer, and Director and co-founder of The Liaison Office Masood Karokhail for their respective briefings.

I have expressed my concern to the Council on several occasions, whether on thematic issues or country-specific situations, that despite recent strides in strengthening the ability of the United Nations to protect civilians, conflicts around the world are still characterized by a prevailing disrespect for the core principles of international human rights and humanitarian law, including the responsibility to protect people from genocide and other mass atrocities, as reaffirmed by resolution 2150 (2014). Combatants in various theatres of conflict are behaving with disregard for the rule of law, including the principles of distinction and proportionality. The continued targeted attacks on civilian areas and infrastructure, coupled with the use of heavy weaponry, put civilian lives in danger.

It is unfortunate that, 11 years after the fateful date of 19 August 2003, when a terrorist attack against the Canal Hotel in Baghdad killed 22 people, including Special Representative of the Secretary-General Sergio Vieira de Mello, whom we remember today, humanitarian workers continue to be attacked or killed while working in conflict zones. Moreover, discrimination and the restrictions imposed by belligerents around the world continue to hamper the

delivery of humanitarian aid, endangering the lives of people in need. The perpetrators of such acts must be prosecuted and held accountable. We reiterate our call on all parties to conflict to observe strict compliance with international law, to avoid targeting humanitarian workers and their assets, to stop militarizing United Nations and humanitarian facilities and to allow unhindered access to humanitarian aid for affected people.

We believe that effectively protecting humanitarian workers requires concerted efforts by all stakeholders, including the United Nations, in building a security strategy that ensures broad-based acceptance of the impartiality, neutrality and independence of humanitarian organizations based on the 1949 Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. That requires continuous engagement with all the parties to a conflict and building trust with the relevant political forces at the local and national levels.

As the maintenance of international peace and security remains an essential task of the United Nations, humanitarian organizations rely on the sustained efforts being made in this domain by the Organization, especially by the Security Council. Peacekeeping operations play an important role in that mission, as they are often the only reliable force on the ground to create conditions for humanitarian organizations to operate. The Security Council should ensure that the effective protection of humanitarian workers in armed conflict is clearly outlined when authorizing peacekeeping-mandated missions, as well as the means for carrying out such mandates, including an emphasis on the physicial protection of humanitarian workers.

However, as recalled by the Deputy Secretary-General, military personnel should not be directly involved in humanitarian action, as that would associate humanitarian organizations — in the minds of local authoritites and populations — with political or military objectives, hence putting their mission in jeopardy. Peacekeeping missions, however, should help the host States in strengthening the rule of law and boosting their protective, investigative and prosecutorial capacities in order to ensure accountability and responsibility.

We believe that the United Nations and humanitarian organizations can take advantage of the evolving role of regional and subregional organizations in building trust with parties to conflicts. Owing to their regional, cultural, linguistic and even religious proximity, such organizations are better equipped to conduct knowledge-based and culturally sensitive campaigns, including raising awareness on compliance with obligations under international humanitarian law. Furthermore, cultural proximity gives regional organizations access to specific conflict zones that would otherwise be risky or hard to reach by other organizations, including the United Nations.

Most important, as conflicts remain the major cause of human suffering, including the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced persons, we reiterate our firm belief that conflict prevention is the better way to provide protection, including for humanitarian workers. We should strive to address the root causes of conflict in the first place and put in place effective early-warning mechanisms and mediation tools. In that regard, we look forward to the open debate on the prevention of conflicts to be convened by the United Kingdom presidency on Thursday.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute, on this International Humanitarian Day, to humanitarian workers and their organizations for their trememdous work on the ground. Not only do they have to deal with the humanitarian consequences of increasing natural disasters, due mainly to man-made climate change, but they now also confront a concerning upsurge in man-made disasters — armed conflicts — that deserve from the Security Council and its influential members solution-driven consideration, instead of the current interests-driven approach.

Mr. Oh Joon (Republic of Korea): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting. I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, President Peter Peter Maurer of the International Committee of the Red Cross and Director Masood Karokhail of The Liaison Office for their informative briefings.

Today, as we commemorate the memory of the 22 staff members who lost their lives in the 2003 bombing in Baghdad, we are once again reminded that we must prevent the recurrence of that kind of tragedy. The safety and protection of humanitarian workers has been affirmed in various international instruments, including the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. The Security Council condemned all acts of violence directed at humanitarian personnel, as well as attacks on peacekeepers, in its presidential statement on the

protection of civilians adopted during my country's presidency of the Security Council in February 2013 (S/PRST/2013/2). Nevertheless, with the ongoing humanitarian impacts of armed conflicts today, humanitarian personnel are increasingly exposed to more complex and risky environments than ever before. A significant rise in abductions of United Nations personnel and non-United Nations humantarian workers has occurred in Afghanistan, Mali, the Sudan and other places. Furthermore, in the past few weeks, 11 staff members of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East were killed during shelling in Gaza as they worked tirelessly to provide humanitarian aid to those in need. Against that disconcerting backdrop, I would like to make a few observations on how to enhance the protection of humanitarian workers and assets.

First, with regard to prevention, a defining feature of many contemporary conflicts is a failure to respect international humanitarian law by both State and non-State armed actors. As such, it is absolutely essential to improve compliance with international humanitarian law as a robust preventive measure for the protection of humanitarian workers in the field. Fundamental international humanitarian law, such as the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the 1977 Additional Protocols thereto and the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, should be fully implemented. It is also importany to raise awareness on the need for respecting humanitarian action and humanitarian personnel, especially among military and security forces.

Secondly, with regard to protection, a main challenge for humanitarian workers is striking a balance between effectively carrying out humanitarian programmes and the risks faced by humanitarian workers. In particular, as the humanitarian activities of local and international civil society organizations have recently proliferated, the protection of non-governmental humanitarian personnel is also emerging as an urgent challenge. The United Nations should continue to strengthen and refine its security management strategy. In terms of practical measures, it is necessary to further develop guidelines and tools to support a risk-management approach to humanitarian activities. At the same time, dialogue with the relevant Governments and non-State parties will help humanitarian organizations to better understand often-fluid security situations, as well as social and cultural factors on the ground.

Thirdly, with regard to accountability, it is critical to ensure accountability for attacks and other violations against humanitarian personnel. The primary obligation to investigate and prosecute such violations lies with national authorities; but in reality there are relatively small numbers of prosecutions at the national level. It is necessary, therefore, that the international community provide financial and technical support with a view to improving accountability at the national level. At the same time, national accountability mechanisms can be complemented by commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions and sanctions regimes, as well as by possible referrals to the International Criminal Court.

Before concluding, I wish to pay tribute to all those humanitarian workers who lost their lives while delivering life-saving assistance to people in need. We have come to realize that, by targeting humanitarian workers, such attacks have brought inhumane harm to so many civilians waiting for assistance in dire situations. That is an important lesson that we should never forget.

Mr. Sarki (Nigeria): Recently, you, Mr. President, led the Security Council on a trip to Somalia and South Sudan. There, the members of the group witnessed for themselves the value and the difference that humanitarian workers can make in the lives of displaced persons and others affected by conflict.

Today's briefing on the occasion of World Humanitarian Day is very timely. We thank the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Director of The Liaison Office for their helpful briefings. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, for his presence. His remarks were inspiring, and the deficit of humanity to which he so accurately referred is indeed at the heart of the problem that we are addressing this morning.

Eleven years ago today, the world was shocked by the appalling news of the deliberate attack by terrorists on the Baghdad headquarters of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. Twenty-two people, including Sergio Vieira de Mello, lost their lives in that atrocity, which also left more than 100 others injured. The attack was a wake-up call to the international community. It also reminded us of the stark reality that the provision of humanitarian assistance in situations of conflict was not without grave risks.

Since the 2003 attack in Baghdad, hundreds of humanitarian workers have been attacked, kidnapped

or killed in the line of duty. That is the reality in which humanitarian workers operate in many parts of the world today. They face such risks daily as they go about their noble duties. That does not have to be the case. Indeed, it should not be so.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms such cowardly and outrageous attacks, which contravene the highly protected status of humanitarian workers under international humanitarian law. The foundation of the protection afforded to humanitarian workers lies in the fundamental principle of international humanitarian law, which draws a clear distinction between combatants and non-combatants. As persons not participating in conflict, assaults on humanitarian workers are unacceptable and indefensible.

States bear the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers. However, most conflicts occur in a fluid atmosphere of lawlessness, where governance structures are weak and State authority is lacking. The situation is further compounded by the proliferation of non-State actors, including extremist groups, terrorists and criminal networks. Such groups are usually ignorant of or lack respect for human rights and the principles of international humanitarian law.

Given the multiplicity of warring factions, it has proved cumbersome in certain instances to negotiate with every warring faction for the safe passage of humanitarian personnel and assets. Strengthening coordination among humanitarian actors is expedient, within their respective mandates, in order to complement their efforts and to enhance the safety of their personnel. In addition, smart and adequate security measures must be put in place to protect aid workers. However, care should be taken to ensure that such protective measures do not affect aid workers' neutrality of passage or increase hostilities towards them. We take note of the remarks by the Director of The Liaison Office in that regard.

In that context, we also note the adoption of alternative protection measures, such as community-based policing, which are increasingly being adopted by humanitarian agencies. Nigeria reiterates that the parties to an armed conflict — State and non-State actors alike — must take appropriate steps to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel. In order to to prevent a culture of impunity, we call on States to ensure that credible and timely investigations into alleged attacks on humanitarian workers are conducted and that the perpetrators of such acts are held accountable. When States are unwilling or lack the capacity to prosecute such violations, the onus of referring such violations to international mechanisms so that they can be addressed and remedied lies with the international community.

Finally, we believe that it is essential to mitigate the intensity and frequency of attacks against humanitarian workers. The international community must remain engaged in exploring various means to safeguard their safety and security in the theatres of conflict around the globe. We express our heartfelt gratitude to humanitarian workers for their courage and dedication to alleviating the suffering of people affected by conflict despite the challenges that they face. We offer our deepest condolences to the families of those who have lost loved ones in the course of providing humanitarian assistance to those in need.

Ms. King (Australia): I thank you, Mr. President, for dedicating the Council's time this morning to this vital issue. We thank the briefers for eloquently reminding us today that millions of civilians are under threat, caught up in humanitarian crises and directly attacked in conflicts. Without the assistance of humanitarian workers, their suffering would be indescribably worse. The world is experiencing the greatest number of simultaneous major crises in decades. At the end of 2013, more than 50 million people were displaced, either internally or as refugees. Every one of those people required some form of protection and assistance. As an international community, we rely on humanitarian workers to deliver vital assistance in dangerous places and, as Mr. Maurer has emphasized, they rely on the humanitarian principles to protect them.

As we commemorate today the tragic bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad and honour those who have given their lives in the service of humankind, we also pay tribute to all humanitarian workers currently working tirelessly and unarmed in some of the world's most volatile conflict and disaster zones.

Humanitarian workers are more essential, and yet more vulnerable, than ever before. The deliberate targeting of humanitarian personnel has become a sickening hallmark of conflict. Violence against aid workers sank to new depths in 2013. The figures recalled this morning are shocking. We mention in particular the impact on national staff, who risk their own safety, even while their families may be under threat, in order to save lives in their own countries and

communities. The vast majority of attacks in 2013 were against national staff, as we have heard this morning, and we know that the statistics tell only part of the story. It is an outrage that those who work to save lives become targets themselves for that very reason. That is a security challenge that must be confronted.

Under international law, the protection of civilians, including humanitarian workers, is the responsibility of all parties to conflict. International humanitarian law provides protection for relief and medical personnel. Those rules must be respected. United Nations premises must also be inviolable. Schools and hospitals must remain sanctuaries. The Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel and its Optional Protocol aim to protect such personnel and to prevent impunity for attacks on United Nations personnel or property. We urge all States to accede to those instruments.

The work of the humanitarian community is inextricably linked to the work of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. The majority of attacks against aid workers occur in situations on our agenda. Civilians and civilian infrastructure are increasingly targeted in armed conflicts. In some cases, that is part of a deliberate military strategy. As a result, the denial of humanitarian assistance for those civilians, including attacks on humanitarians trying to help them, has become more systematic. Put simply, such actions have become an element of conflict. The situation in Syria is a striking example, which is why, faced with the magnitude of human suffering there, the Council unanimously adopted resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014) in support of the humanitarian effort.

The Council has long recognized that the protection of civilians is central to our work. In order to protect civilians, we must safeguard humanitarians and ensure access for them. It is incumbent upon the Council to use all of the tools at its disposal to do so. In that connection, there are things we should do.

First, we should ensure that resolution 1502 (2003), on the protection of humanitarian personnel, is fully implemented. But, given the increasing attacks on humanitarian personnel, the Council should now build upon that resolution.

Secondly, we should continue to mandate peacekeeping missions aimed at establishing enabling conditions for principled humanitarian action where appropriate, as we have done in South Sudan. That can range from support to peace processes, to reporting on access challenges, as well as security actions to protect humanitarian and United Nations personnel and facilities and keep access routes open. In all cases, humanitarian principles must be paramount.

Thirdly, where there is a sanctions regime in place, we should apply sanctions against those who obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Fourthly, the Council must work to end impunity for attacks on humanitarians. Perpetrators should be brought to justice before a court of law, whether domestic or international. The Council should make clear its expectation that attacks on civilian humanitarian workers will be fully investigated. Where a State is unwilling or unable to carry out such investigations, the creation of United Nations fact-finding missions can be appropriate. It is incumbent upon the Council to support the prosecution of attacks on humanitarian personnel. We welcome the fact that the International Criminal Court is currently trying Abdallah Banda Abakaer Nourain for an alleged attack on the African Union Mission in the Sudan, for example, as the result of a referral by the Council. It is incumbent upon the Council to support such processes.

Finally, the proliferation of non-State armed groups poses unique challenges. We applaud the work of organizations such as Geneva Call and the International Committee of the Red Cross aimed at promoting compliance by those groups with their obligations. The Council should continue to explore creative ways of promoting compliance by such groups, as we have done in dealing with the issue of children in armed conflict.

Humanitarian operations remain a crucial part of the collective commitment to international peace and security. We will not accept attacks on humanitarian workers as an inevitable consequence of conflict. Very often, humanitarians are the ones protecting civilians. The Council must act to protect them.

Mr. Wang Min (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Today is World Humanitarian Day. The Security Council's discussion today on the protection of humanitarian workers is of special significance. I would like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson for his briefing. China has also listened conscientiously to the briefings by Mr. Maurer, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the representative of non-governmental organizations.

This year marks the fifteenth anniversary of the adoption by the Council of resolution 1265 (1999),

on the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Over the past 15 years, the international community has made unremitting efforts to protect civilians in armed conflict, provide timely humanitarian relief and assist the victims of conflict to improve their plight, and there have been positive achievements. Meanwhile, regional hot-spot issues continue to crop up. Conflicts have become increasingly complicated. The humanitarian workers of the United Nations, humanitarian agencies and relief organizations working on the front lines are facing an ever-deteriorating security environment and conditions. From Iraq to the Gaza Strip and from Somalia in the Horn of Africa to the Central African Republic, humanitarian workers are constantly subject to various forms of violent attacks. Some of them have even lost their lives as a result of those attacks.

China attaches great importance to the protection of humanitarian workers. We condemn attacks and violent acts against humanitarian workers. We pay tribute to those who brave difficulties in providing selfless, life-saving services in armed conflicts.

China supports discussions by the international community on the strengthening of the protection of humanitarian workers. I would like to make the following four observations.

First, the protection of humanitarian workers is the inescapable responsibility of the parties to a given conflict. All parties to armed conflict should abide by international law, including international humanitarian law and the conventions governing the safety of United Nations personnel, and honour the obligation to protect humanitarian workers. With regard to attacks on and violent acts harming humanitarian workers, the international community should encourage the countries involved to carry out investigations, and we should respect their findings. Perpetrators must be held accountable, and assistance must be provided to countries in need of financial and technical support.

Secondly, United Nations humanitarian agencies and relief organizations, while carrying out humanitarian relief work in conflict, should comply with the Charter of the United Nations; uphold the principles of humanitarianism, namely neutrality, impartiality and independence; fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries involved; and avoid engaging in the conflict or supporting any of the parties. That is essential if humanitarian relief efforts are to win the understanding and trust of all parties. It is also an important guarantee of the safety of humanitarian workers.

Thirdly, the prevention and resolution of conflicts is key to enhancing the protection of humanitarian workers. The Security Council has the primary responsibility to maintain international peace and security. It should actively carry out political mediation and preventive diplomacy, encourage the parties concerned to resolve their differences through peaceful means such as dialogue and negotiation, prevent and curb the escalation of conflict and work for a political solution, thus alleviating the harm inflicted on humanitarian workers by addressing its root causes. The Security Council's authorization and deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations can play an important role in supporting the success of humanitarian relief efforts and protecting humanitarian workers.

Fourthly, in providing comprehensive protection to humanitarian workers, Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian agencies must take coordinated and concerted actions so as to create synergies. The United Nations should fully leverage its comprative advantage, carry out an in-depth analysis and evaluation of the risks in and challenges to humanitarian relief work in conflict zones based on respect for the views of the countries involved, maintain communication and coordination with the parties to the conflict and strengthen the protection of humanitarian workers. Comprehensive measures must be taken to effectively cope with all the security challenges faced by humanitarian workers.

Ms. Murmokaitė (Lithuania): I would like to thank the United Kingdom for organizing this timely briefing on World Humanitarian Day, and the three briefers for their sobering contributions.

With an unprecedented number of level 3 humanitarian crises and over 50 million refugees and internally displaced people in the world, the dedicated services of humanitarian workers could not be more vitally important. As we pay tribute to all the humanitarian workers whose selfless efforts testify to what is best in our humanity, we must also seek to ensure that their life-saving work does not exact the ultimate price: the price of their own lives.

Last week, the Council visited South Sudan, seeing at first hand those displaced as they tried to survive in appalling conditions, threatened by cholera and other

diseases and on the brink of famine, with some 50,000 children at risk of dying from acute malnutrition. To many of those displaced, United Nations protection and humanitarian aid are their only lifeline. That lifeline has been threatened by violations of status of forces agreements and by incitement and attacks against humanitarian workers. Early this month, six humanitarian workers were killed. As Toby Lanzer, United Nations Resident Coordinator in South Sudan, lamented,

> "I cannot imagine how anybody could do that. Somebody who has come to provide medical care and attention to your children, and you have executed that person. It defies the imagination."

And yet that which defies the imagination is an increasingly dangerous reality for humanitarian workers in all conflict zones. The year 2013 saw a total of 460 aid workers killed, wounded or kidnapped, the highest number ever. The first eight months of 2014 have also been deadlier for humanitarian workers than the entire year 2012. As the most recent report of Humanitarian Outcomes indicates, the number of victims relative to the attack rate also continues to rise.

Locally recruited humanitarian personnel are especially vulnerable to attacks and account for the majority of casualties, kidnappings, harassment, banditry and intimidation. We must do more to protect humanitarian workers, including national staff. Questions related to the proliferation of non-State actors in conflict zones and the increasingly asymmetrical nature of threats must be urgently addressed, among other issues.

The Rome Statute defines attacks against humanitarian workers as a war crime. Resolution 1502 (2003) establishes that status-of-forces, status-of-mission and host country agreements between the United Nations and host countries should include provisions designating attacks against humanitarian personnel as crimes punishable by law and requiring the prosecution or extradition of offenders. Yet how often have we seen those provisions put into action? Whether for lack of capacity or of political will, a notable gap exists regarding accountability for crimes against humanitarian workers. States need to make sure that perpetrators of attacks committed in their territory against humanitarian and United Nations and associated personnel are brought to justice. As long as the climate of impunity prevails, humanitarian workers will be increasingly exposed to attacks and other life-threatening situations.

For its part, the Council should consistently condemn attacks against humanitarian medical workers and should seek accountability for such crimes, including through the use of the various instruments at its disposal, such as sanctions, the designation of criteria, commissions of inquiry, fact-finding missions, reporting by human rights monitoring teams and referrals to the International Criminal Court.

Humanitarian action, as described in the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols of 1977, is based on the principles of impartiality, neutrality and independence — the essential features of any humanitarian operation, as was stressed earlier today by the Deputy Secretary-General and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Violating those principles may incur grave consequences for humanitarian workers themselves, as well as for those who depend on the assistance they provide.

In Syria, we have witnessed a most blatant violation of those principles of impartiality and neutrality, as parties to the conflict, in particular the Syrian regime, have repeatedly obstructed humanitarian aid, withheld consent for operations and redirected aid as a tactic of war. The Council must ensure that the relevant humanitarian resolutions are implemented in full and must take the necessary further action in the event of a failure to do so.

My delegation is also concerned with regard to the politicization of humanitarian access on the eastern borders of Ukraine, where attempts to deliver purported humanitarian aid have been accompanied by increased military movements on the part of Russia, violations of Ukraine's borders and continued support to anti-Ukrainian rebel groups. All such attempts to manipulate humanitarian access for military or political purposes are totally unacceptable and go counter to the spirit and letter of international humanitarian law.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Mr. Maurer, and to Mr. Karokhail for their participation in today's meeting and their substantive briefings.

The protection of humanitarian personnel is an important aspect of protecting civilians in

armed conflict. Today, as we commemorate World Humanitarian Day, once again we would like to pay tribute to the bravery and self-sacrifice of personnel from international humanitarian agencies who are carrying out the crucial function of providing assistance to and easing the suffering of civilians in trying conditions.

Against the backdrop of ongoing armed conflicts, the provision of humanitarian assistance has gained the distinction of being one of the most dangerous types of activities. In that regard, the Council has repeatedly called upon the parties to armed conflicts to scrupulously comply with the provisions of international humanitarian law, to respect and protect humanitarian personnel and humanitarian cargoes and to take all the necessary steps to ensure the safe, rapid and unimpeded movement of humanitarian cargo, equipment and personnel.

Despite the measures undertaken by the international community, efforts to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel and United Nations personnel remain hampered, and their lives and health are still threatened. We are seriously concerned about information contained in the latest report of the Secretary-General (A/68/489) on the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and the number of killed and wounded humanitarian workers in 2013. That number is a record figure compared to all previous periods. Eleven staff members of the United Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East died in July in the course of the bloody conflict in Gaza, which has yet to be ended.

The international community was shaken by incidents involving the bombing of United Nations schools sheltering Palestinian civilians. Dozens of volunteers from the Red Crescent died in Syria while implementing their humanitarian functions. All of that serves to underscore the need for the additional mobilization of efforts by Member States, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations aimed at strengthening mechanisms to ensure the safety of humanitarian workers. We support the activities of the Secretariat to strengthen the new system of security levels in effect since 2011 and the implementation of the United Nations work aimed at protecting humanitarian personnel via the concept of standing and delivering.

Our position is that each incidence of violence against humanitarian workers must be carefully investigated and the guilty brought to justice. Of course, the imperative must be strict compliance by humanitarian organizations of the guidelines laid out in General Assembly resolutions with respect to the provision of humanitarian assistance.

One of the priorities today must be the adoption of urgent measures to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of south-eastern Ukraine. One would recall that certain members of the Council have admired the "restraint" of the authorities in Kyiv, as if encouraging them to undertake more reckless military actions. Now that posture has led to hundreds of civilian casualties. The Government forces and mercenary punitive units continue to carry out indiscriminate artillery shelling against cities and other localities in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, including using incendiary munitions. It is obvious that the only truly effective way to protect civilians in that conflict is an immediate, unconditional ceasefire, which we have repeatedly called for.

At the meeting of the Council on 8 August, the Ukrainian representative stated that there was no humanitarian crisis in Ukraine (see S/PV.7239). As it has done previously, Kyiv would prefer to ignore the plight of hundreds of thousands of people in Donetsk and Luhansk who, through Kyiv's own fault, have been left without water, electricity, medicine, medical assistance and food. The continuing deterioration of the situation and the increase in humanitarian needs has been noted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Based on its data, just for the period from 10 to 15 August, more than 22,000 people have left Donetsk and Luhansk. Given those conditions, we attach great importance to the successful implementation of the effort to deliver Russian humanitarian assistance to the combat-weary areas of south-eastern Ukraine, in conjunction with the International Committee of the Red Cross.

How many unfounded political insinuations have we had to listen to in that regard. The authorities in Kyiv responded in their own way, ratcheting up hostilities with the clear aim of cutting off the route negotiated with them for the humanitarian assistance from the Russian-Ukrainian border to Luhansk. The intensity of the shelling of Luhansk and its suburbs has increased, precisely in those places where it was planned to deliver humanitarian assistance. Nevertheless, the efforts taken by the Russian leadership have borne fruit. All the technical issues have been resolved, which was confirmed in a recent meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Germany, Russia, Ukraine and France in Berlin.

We hope that no one will renew attempts to obstruct the delivery of humanitarian assistance from Russia, and that in the next few hours that effort can begin. At the same time, there remains an urgent need that the Ukrainian side guarantee the safety of humanitarian personnel.

In conclusion, I would like to express our gratitude to the President of the ICRC, Mr. Maurer, for his personal active involvement in organizing the delivery of the Russian humanitarian assistance to the people in eastern Ukraine, who urgently need it.

Mr. Mangaral (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Eliasson, Mr. Maurer and Mr. Karokhail for their briefings.

As we commemorate World Humanitarian Day, allow me to pay tribute to the efforts undertaken by humanitarian workers in conditions that are often dangerous to their lives. We commend the initiative of the United Kingdom to convene this meeting, which provides us with an opportunity to remember and pay tribute to the humanitarian aid workers who have lost their lives to save the lives of others. Today civilian populations, as well as humanitarian workers, are paying the toll for the wars around the world and are often the target of the parties to a conflict. The wars in Syria, Somalia, South Sudan, the Central African Republic and Iraq today serve to highlight the shortcomings in United Nations actions and also the need to step up efforts in order to provide maximum protection. While humanitarian workers and those of the United Nations carry out their missions, that often means that they themselves become helpless victims, which is a source of discouragement, and it also means that people feel abandoned.

United Nations action needs to be effective with respect to civilians, and that is being challenged. The high number of humanitarian workers who have been killed is a logical consequence of this state of affairs. However, the Security Council's role with respect to the protection of civilians is reaffirmed and continues to be one of major concern. In its presidential statement of 12 February 1999 (S/PRST/1999/6), the Security Council underscores the close nexus between systematic general violations of civilian rights and the breakdown in international peace and security. The recurrent Council debates of recent years, along with those held by international legal bodies under the Geneva Conventions of 1949, its 1977 Additional Protocol II and the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, should have helped to improve the situation.

However, one would note that many challenges persist. The attacks against civilians and United Nations personnel are instead growing in scope. That is an additional reason for the members of the Council to wonder about the shortcomings of United Nations actions in terms of improving the situation. Clearly, the difficulties in providing assistance to civilians continue to be many, and defending and protecting civilians in countries in armed conflict and protecting the lives of humanitarian workers unfortunately do not enjoy the same means and resources internationally. The protection of civilians is at times complex and can be impeded when there are differences within the Council, as is the case currently with respect to Syria or Ukraine.

On the other hand, the issue of the protection of aid workers — and no one disputes this — can be greatly improved by implementing the existing legal and political mechanisms. Proposals of the Secretary-General exist to do that. The 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel is one route. That Convention requires Member States to not only prevent attacks against civilians but also urges that they be prosecuted and that perpetrators be appropriately punished. Similarly, the implementation of the Geneva Convention of 1949 and its Additional Protocols need to be implemented. Resolution 1502 (2003) is important in that it calls on the Secretary-General to include in status-of-forces agreements, status-of-mission agreements and host country agreements between the United Nations and the host countries the necessary key measures under the 1994 Convention, particularly with respect to preventing attacks against United Nations operations personnel.

What is key today is to prevent attacks of this kind and to prosecute perpetrators. Similarly, there is no follow-up system with respect to measures envisaged against perpetrators of those acts internationally or internally.

In conclusion, States need to be aware of their responsibilities and act with awareness of the consequences. The Security Council needs to focus its efforts in the areas of prevention while restoring a true dialogue with the countries involved in order to prosecute perpetrators of crimes against humanitarian workers and United Nations and local personnel.

Mr. Dunn (United States of America): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this timely discussion. I also would like to thank the briefers for their participation today.

On this eleventh anniversary of the Canal Hotel bombing in Baghdad and as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel, we honour fallen United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers. I commend the work of humanitarian workers around the world, including national and local staff, and reaffirm our shared view that attacks on United Nations peacekeepers and humanitarian workers are a flagrant violation of international law.

Humanitarian workers are the international community's emergency life line to vulnerable and isolated communities. Today, 108 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, and more people are displaced by violence worldwide than ever before. Humanitarian workers are critical to the Security Council's ability to respond to deteriorating humanitarian situations caused by threats to peace and security. Violence against humanitarian workers has intensified in the past 11 years, with casualties tripling since the 2003 attack in Baghdad. Last year alone, there were 251 incidents of major violence against aid workers in 30 different countries. Against the backdrop of increasingly challenging conditions for humanitarians, I would like to stress three priorities for the United States: ensuring safety and access for humanitarian workers, facilitating humanitarian assistance and pursuing accountability.

We are extremely alarmed at the increasing frequency of attacks against humanitarian workers and the number of humanitarian workers killed in 2013, especially in Syria, where 109 aid workers have been killed, detained, kidnapped or held hostage since the beginning of the civil war. Despite the dangerous conditions, Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteers have continued to deliver much-needed aid to people in Syria.

Such attacks, in the words this morning of the Deputy Secretary-General, represent a deficit of humanity. Not only do they rob the world of brave, committed individuals, but they also deny vulnerable populations critical, life-saving humanitarian assistance during dire humanitarian situations. In the interests of ensuring the safety and security of aid workers, the United States reaffirms our commitment to the independence, humanity, neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian operations.

Humanitarian workers today face a growing threat from non-State actors. Last November, insurgents ambushed and killed five Afghans working on a literacy project managed by a French charity. Just yesterday, the Council released a press statement (SC/11523) regarding two United Nations peacekeepers killed in an attack in northern Mali over the weekend. Earlier this month, a militia targeted and killed at least five South Sudanese aid workers.

We stress that the primary responsibility under international law for the security and protection of United Nations personnel and humanitarian workers lies with the Governments hosting United Nations operations. That leads me to the question of access. The United States is deeply disturbed by the rising number of humanitarian crises to which the international humanitarian community has little access because staff safety and security cannot be guaranteed. The lack of access in places like Syria, Iraq, the Central African Republic, the Sudan, South Sudan and Somalia, among others, has prevented millions of vulnerable citizens from receiving much-needed food, water, shelter and medicine.

We call on all parties, States and non-State actors alike, to facilitate full, immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. United Nations peacekeeping missions can play an essential role in creating secure conditions for humanitarian operations if they are mandated to do so. We welcome the collaboration, coordination and cooperation among the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations humanitarian country teams, especially where mandates include creating the necessary conditions for facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as is the case with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

Finally, impunity for violence against humanitarian workers must end. There has been little to no accountability for humanitarian workers killed in the line of duty. The United States supports efforts to strengthen accountability and to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against humanitarian workers. We encourage the Council to employ commissions of

inquiry, fact-finding missions and sanctions, as well as to support national authorities in their investigations and prosecutions. At the same time, we encourage the Council to develop creative solutions for dealing with the threat posed by non-State actors to the dedicated humanitarian workers we honour today. It is time for the Council to take action.

Mr. Hmoud (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for organizing this very important meting. I would also like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Peter Maurer, and the Director of The Liaison Office, Mr. Masood Karokhail, for their briefings.

Today's meeting is being held as we mark World Humanitarian Day 2014 and as we commemorate the eleventh anniversary of the terrible attack against United Nations headquarters at Baghdad in 2003, which claimed victims among the ranks of United Nations personnel. In that regard, we pay well deserved tribute to the humanitarian workers and actors who have lost their lives in the line of duty. I would also like to pay tribute to all those who continue to face danger in order to provide humanitarian assistance in areas of conflict.

Recently, there has been an increase in the rate of attacks perpetrated against United Nations staff and individuals associated with the United Nations. In fact, peacekeeping missions are no longer spared by the frequency of armed conflicts and continued attacks. United Nations personnel face threats and even abductions, as well as restrictions that hinder the delivery of humanitarian assistance. All of that has adverse consequences for the ability of missions to carry out their duties in order to meet the needs of victims, who include civilians, namely, the victims of internal conflicts.

The fact that the international community is not present in areas of conflict endangers the lives of humanitarian workers. The Security Council must therefore assume its responsibility to restore international peace and security in conflict zones and to provide the necessary means within the framework of mandates for humanitarian agents to assure the necessary protection for humanitarians, as well as to guarantee humanitarian access to those who need it. The deficiencies with respect to humanitarian personnel in conflict zones weakens the civilian population, which means that there are additional burdens with regard to the mandates issued by the Security Council. It is therefore in the interests of the United Nations and the Security Council to ensure the necessary protection for humanitarian workers. In that regard, we reiterate the need to uphold the provisions of international humanitarian law and the need to implement them, while taking all the necessary measures to protect civilians affected by conflict with a view to putting an end to their suffering. We also stress the need for the parties to a conflict to respect their commitments regarding humanitarian workers under the relevant conventions, as well as the provisions of international humanitarian law. That should be clear in the light of the flagrant and massive violations we are witnessing in places like Gaza, Syria, Iraq, the Sudan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, the Great Lakes region and the Sahel.

We should also focus on the practical measures we can take in order to improve the observance of World Humanitarian Day and to guarantee the safety of such actions.

In the light of the changes we have seen in United Nations peacekeeping activities with respect to concepts, mandates and missions, we have emerged from the traditional military model into multidimensional and multifaceted operations that include the role of protecting civilians. That means that roles must be defined in a clear, unambiguous manner. They must also be coordinated in order to ensure that they correspond to the respective mandates of their missions, whose implementation sometimes requires clarification. The Council, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, must facilitate the cooperation of United Nations missions with humanitarian agencies and workers to ensure that they are provided with the necessary protection. In order to address the challenges related to attacks on humanitarian workers, we must analyse the causes of such attacks, which could be attributed to problems in defining humanitarian actors. That can lead to a lack of distinction between roles, because humanitarian workers, in the view of the warring factions, are linked to military forces, There is therefore a lack of clarity with regard to humanitarian action.

We must also step up our efforts to promote the preventive aspect by strengthening early-warning mechanisms within peacekeeping missions in order to be able to anticipate situations that may arise, as well as address humanitarian needs and the need to protect

civilians in order to tackle the wave of violence to which civilian and humanitarian actors are exposed in conflict zones.

We must also ensure that humanitarian workers are committed to upholding the basic humanitarian principles related to neutrality, impartiality and independence so that they are able to build trust between themselves and the parties to a conflict and thus contribute to reducing the number of attacks that target them.

Finally, the primary responsibility for protecting civilians lies with States. However, the international community must remain focused on practical measures that are likely to improve respect for international humanitarian law, while bearing in mind certain guarantees that will facilitate the implementation of humanitarian action.

To conclude, I would like to reaffirm the need for the perpetrators of such violations to be brought to justice and to be held accountable for their acts. Those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable for their acts before international courts.

Mr. Barros Melet (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the Deputy Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Director of The Liaison Office for their briefings. Chile commends the President's initiative in organizing today's meeting, which we consider particularly timely since it coincides with the commemoration of World Humanitarian Day.

The protection of humanitarian workers in areas of conflict is a crucial matter that deserves the full consideration of the Security Council. In fact, 15 years after this body began to address the issue, while armed intra-State conflicts have proliferated, there has also been an increase in the number of deliberate attacks on humanitarian workers, as well as their abduction and even death in the danger zones where they are deployed. That includes personnel of the United Nations and its associated agencies and affiliates involved in providing humanitarian assistance. According to the report published today by the Aid Worker Security Database, there has been a 66 per cent increase in the number of victims with respect to the figures for last year.

States and non-State actors must comply with the international humanitarian standards enshrined in the Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Protocols additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1977 and 2005 and the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel of 1994. It is imperative to ensure the conditions for humanitarian agencies to carry out their work in accordance with humanitarian principles.

We strongly condemn attacks on humanitarian workers, who perform the task of providing assistance to civilians in armed conflicts, including women and children, in extremely difficult situations. In places such as Afghanistan, the Syrian Arab Republic, South Sudan, the Sudan, Somalia, Mali and, recently, Gaza, among others, it would seem that attacks on humanitarian staff are par for the course. Such acts may constitute war crimes, and their perpetrators must be investigated and punished in order to prevent impunity. The host Government must assume the primary responsibility for the security and protection of humanitarian workers and ensure national accountability processes, impartial investigations, fair trials and the effective fulfilment of sentences. If that is not the case, where appropriate, there should be recourse to complementary international judicial bodies, such as the International Criminal Court.

The development of mandates for peacekeeping operations must be appropriate in order to deal with threats to the security and stability of those countries, including the due protection of the civilian population and of those who carry out humanitarian tasks. We believe the significant number of mandates for peacekeeping operations that contain an explicit reference to the protection of civilians to be progress. It is crucially important that peacekeeping missions have the necessary resources to ensure compliance with their mandates in that regard. During our recent trip to South Sudan, where we visited the area of Malakal, we witnessed on the ground the vital work that the United Nations undertakes in that regard.

In conclusion, we would like to pay tribute to all humanitarian workers of the United Nations and its agencies, as well as its implementing partners, who carry out their work in the toughest conditions, and to those who have lost their lives in fulfilling their duties. We recall with respect and admiration the work done by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Sergio Vieira de Mello, who, together with another 21 United Nations officials, fell victim to a terrorist attack in Baghdad in 2003. Finally, in particular, we remember the 11 officials of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near

East who lost their lives as a result of military operations in the Gaza Strip, underscoring their courage and commitment.

Mr. Lamek (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Eliasson, Mr. Maurer and Mr. Karokhail for their briefings.

On World Humanitarian Day, France pays tribute to the 22 members of the United Nations staff who lost their lives during the attack on the Canal Hotel in Baghdad in 2003. Eleven years later, unfortunately, this debate is still relevant, as humanitarian actors are subject to an increasing number of targeted and deliberate attacks in the countries where they are present in order to save lives.

France welcomes the commitment of humanitarian actors, who provide assistance in increasingly difficult conditions at the risk of their lives, in particular local workers, who are the most affected, as Mr. Karokhail has just underscored. France hopes that his message is heard in this body, as well as by all States Members of the United Nations, so that we can work together to better protect lcoal staff.

Why do such attacks take place, since humanitarian actors come to save lives, protect populations and provide shelter to the most vulnerable? The reason is because the strategy of repressive regimes seeks to deprive people in rebel areas of all means of survival; because a starving population who is terrorized and abandoned is more likely to accept a dictatorship; and because attacking humanitarian workers is an attempt to scare away the international community in order to oppress the population without being seen from outside and with complete impunity.

In the Sudan yesterday and still today, humanitarian organizations are being expelled. In Syria, in particular in Aleppo, hospitals are the preferred targets of barrel bombs launched by the regime's forces. In Iraq, the Islamic State sows terror and threatens humanitarian staff. In Somalia, as elsewhere, the insecurity of humanitarian workers further hampers access to those in need. That is why it is essential to ensure follow-up to the attacks on humanitarian personnel in the context of a database.

Attacking humanitarian workers deployed in situations of international armed conflict is a war crime that can be referred to the International Criminal Court. In addition to the general rules for the protection of civilians applicable to staff of humanitarian organizations, including the fundamental principles of distinguishing between combatants and civilians, precaution and proportionality, there are the specific rules of international humanitarian law.

It is the responsibility of the Security Council to act in order to prevent and stop such acts. Every tool at our disposal must be mobilized. The mandates of peacekeeping operations must provide for the establishment of an environment conducive to humanitarian access. We did that in particular in the cases of Mali and the Central African Republic. We must continue to use the possibility of referring a situation to the International Criminal Court, when necessary, as we did for the Sudan and Libya, but unfortunately failed to do for Syria. We must also impose sanctions against those responsible for hampering humanitarian access and for deliberate attacks against humanitarian staff.

Finally, we must ensure an effective follow-up of our own decisions. In that regard, on 14 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2165 (2014), on humanitarian access in Syria, in which we decided that all the necessary steps should be taken by the parties so as to ensure the safety and security of all humanitarian actors. The Syrian regime and extremist groups must immediately implement that resolution.

For all those reasons, as you, Mr. President, proposed in your concept note (S/2014/571, annex), it would be extremely relevant to update resolution 2165 (2014).

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Kingdom.

I would like to warmly thank Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, President of the International Committee of the Red Cross Peter Maurer and Director of The Liaison Office Masood Karokhail for their powerful briefings today.

Eleven years ago today, a heinous attack on the United Nations compound killed 22 United Nations staff members, including the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Sergio Vieira de Mello. I, like many others in the Chamber, paid my respects to their memeory at a moving ceremony downstairs this morning.

It is appalling that 11 years later, attacks against humanitarian workers still continue. Indeed, the

problem is getting worse, with 2013 providing a record high for the number of attacks on aid workers — a 66-per-cent increase on 2012. The year 2014 is on course to exceed even that number. Seventy-nine aid workers have already been killed this year, which is more than were killed in the whole of 2012. The issue cannot be ignored. That is why the United Kingdom arranged this briefing to the Security Council today.

The Council has just visited Somalia and South Sudan, which are two of the top five countries in the world most affected by attacks on aid workers. Such attacks are a war crime and exactly the sort of crime that we entrusted the International Criminal Court with prosecuting, as we heard in The Hague last week.

Across the world, aid workers operate in unprecedentedly dangerous environments. Four of the top five countries for attacks, namely, Afghanistan, South Sudan, the Sudan, including Darfur, and Syria, are on the Council's agenda. Aid workers face unprecedented threats. The rise in asymmetric conflicts and the number of non-State actors poses new challenges. The reality is that humanitarian workers are viewed as a soft target. That is a moral outrage and is totally unacceptable.

With the increasing demands on the United Nations to operate in increasingly insecure situations, it is clear that humanitarian workers will remain in the firing line. I applaud the bravery of United Nations and other international and national humanitarian staff, risking their lives to get aid to people in need.

Today, the United Kingdom has announced a further $1.5 million of funding to protect humanitarian workers, including support for non-governmental organization safety offices in Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Libya. The increasing disrespect for international humanitarian law in those environments is of particular concern. As Under-Secretary-General Valerie Amos has repeatedly told the Council, even wars have rules. Attacks on humanitarian workers and their vehicles, supplies and facilities have an impact not only on the safety, security and psychology of those workers, but also on their ability to reach people in need. The international community must come together to ensure greater compliance with international humanitarian law and accountability for those who flout it.

As Mr. Karokhail powerfully reminded us this morning, it is important to recognize that the vast majority — 80 per cent — of attacks are directed against national, locally recruited staff. We heard at first hand from him about the impact of insecurity on the front lines of humanitarian operations in Afghanistan. But it is the same pattern elsewhere. Recently, in Bunj, South Sudan, we saw fatal ethnically motivated attacks on South Sudanese aid workers. The shift towards managing risk by using local staff to deliver aid will only put those staff more and more at risk of attack.

Against that worsening background, it is the Council's duty to act. As colleagues have recalled, we have a number of tools at our disposal. There is condemnation. The Council's statement on the killing of aid workers in South Sudan was a welcome step and raised awareness of the attack. There is direct action. We raised the Bunj attack directly with President Kiir last week, calling on him to speak out clearly against such attacks irrespective of who committed them. We should use our legislative role to ensure that peacekeeping operations are mandated and equipped to create safe conditions for the rapid and unfettered delivery of aid. Special political missions have a key role in promoting institutions to ensure accountability for attacks. We should also, in the case of persistent behaviour, consider sanctions, including against non-State actors.

Eleven years ago, the Council came together to adopt resolution 1502 (2003) in the wake of the attack on the United Nations compound in Baghdad. After today's briefing, there is a strong case for renewed Security Council action. We shall therefore propose a new draft resolution on how the Council can better protect humanitarian workers. It is time for the Council to be heard again.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The Council has concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at noon.