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## **UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND**

**UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, SIXTH COMMITTEE,  
SEVENTY-FIRST SESSION, AGENDA ITEM 82,  
STATUS OF THE PROTOCOLS ADDITIONAL TO THE GENEVA  
CONVENTIONS OF 1949 AND RELATING TO THE PROTECTION OF  
VICTIMS IN ARMED CONFLICT**

**STATEMENT BY MS. SUSAN DICKSON  
LEGAL COUNSELLOR  
UNITED KINGDOM MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**18 OCTOBER 2018**

**Check against delivery**

Mr Chairman,

The United Kingdom welcomes the discussion on the Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts. We align ourselves with the statement delivered by the European Union. In addition, as per UNGA resolution 71/144, we have provided a detailed statement this June, outlining the UK's activities related to implementing and promoting IHL. Further to our statement, we would like to highlight the following points, which demonstrate the UK's activities and efforts in the field of IHL.

Firstly, as an update to our 2016 report, we are pleased to announce that, in 2017, the United Kingdom enacted the Cultural Property (Armed Conflicts) Act. This Act provides for the ratification and accession of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its two Protocols. The Act has now entered into force and the UK has published two guidance documents to support the effective implementation of the Convention, its protocols and the 2017 Act. Looking ahead, we are considering establishing a military cultural property protection unit.

Secondly, this April, the UK endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. By doing so, we join a community of 81 states that have agreed to meet on a regular basis to review the implementation of the Declaration and the application of its guidelines. We continue to encourage other international partners to sign up and implement the Safe Schools Declaration.

Thirdly, the United Kingdom has played a leading role on wider initiatives related to IHL. On the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict initiative, the UK launched the second edition of the International Protocol on Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict in March 2017. Since then, we have used this tool to provide capacity building to practitioners in countries including the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We now have a new Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon who was appointed in 2017. We have also announced that the UK will be hosting an international meeting in 2019 on tackling sexual violence in conflict. This meeting will celebrate progress since the 2014 Global Summit, identify and address the challenges that remain, and galvanise the international community into further action.

The UK also continues to play an active role across the full range of Conventional Arms Control treaties and conventions, which operate within the principles established by IHL. In 2018, this role includes the UK acting as Chair of the Wassenaar arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies.

Fourthly, we underline our support for next year's 33<sup>rd</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. The United Kingdom believes that the Conference is an ideal opportunity to work collaboratively to tackle pressing humanitarian challenges. The parties to the Movement play a crucial role in the

humanitarian field and we greatly value the assistance they provide to those in need in the most dangerous of environments.

In parallel, we continue to support the intergovernmental process to Strengthen Respect for IHL, co-facilitated by the ICRC and Switzerland. Ahead of the Fifth Formal meeting this December, we urge and encourage States to work constructively in finding common ground to support this initiative. The UK has updated its options paper with Argentina and we look forward to working with other countries on developing the commonalities with other proposals.

Lastly, support for international criminal justice and accountability is a fundamental element of UK foreign policy. We reiterate the UK's support for the role of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (IRMCT) and other tribunals established to address serious violations of IHL. HMG has also supported the establishment of evidence gathering mechanisms and fact-finding missions such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism for Syria, the Burma collect and preserve mechanism, and the Daesh Investigative Team.

Mr Chairman, the United Kingdom remains fully committed to the promotion and implementation of International Humanitarian Law.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.