

B. Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled “Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the

Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)” and the item entitled “Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)”. A summary of the meeting is provided under Part I, section 21.A. More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is given in the table below.

Meeting: Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8386 30 October 2018 ^a			Ukraine	Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator	14 Council members, ^b all invitees	Procedural vote (rule 39) 1-7-7c

^a This meeting was held also under the item entitled “Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/136)”.

^b Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, France, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States.

^c *For*: Russian Federation; *against*: France, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom, United States; *abstaining*: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait.

22. Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/218)

During 2018, the Security Council held four meetings under the item “Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/218)”. All four meetings took the form of briefings.³²⁹ More information on the meetings, including on participants and speakers, is given in the table below.

In a letter from the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Secretary-General, annexed to the letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom, the Prime Minister informed the Secretary-General that, on

4 March 2018, Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia Skripal, had been poisoned in Salisbury and were in critical condition. The Prime Minister further stated that a police officer had also been exposed in the attack and remained seriously ill and that specialist military troops had been deployed to assist in the investigation and to secure the sites of contamination. According to the Prime Minister, hundreds of members of the public had also been affected by the incident. She further stated that the United Kingdom police had identified that the chemical used in Salisbury was a specific nerve agent from a class of chemical warfare agents known as “Novichoks”, highly toxic poisons that prevented the normal functioning of the nervous system. According to the Prime Minister, the Government of the United Kingdom believed that, as she had stated to Parliament, it was highly likely that the Russian Federation had

³²⁹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

been responsible for the attack, given its combined capability in chemical warfare, intent to weaponize the agent and motive to target the principal victim. She further stated that the United Kingdom was determined to bring to account those responsible for the crime in accordance with the rule of law. She described the attack as a clear challenge by a State Member of the United Nations to the rules-based international order, which had to be addressed with the support of the international community.³³⁰

The first meeting under this item was held on 14 March 2018. During that meeting, the representative of the United Kingdom affirmed that the incident had been an unlawful use of force and a violation of Article 2 of the Charter.³³¹ During the same meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation stated that the letter contained “totally irresponsible assertions” and included threats to a sovereign State and permanent member of the Council that were contrary to international law and Article 2 (4) of the Charter. The Russian Federation further underlined that his country considered the unfounded accusations in the appeal on 13 March by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to the Secretary-General “totally unacceptable”.³³² Many members of the Council expressed concern regarding the use of a chemical weapon against civilians and the threat that it posed to the international non-proliferation regime,³³³ while others called for the respect of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (Chemical Weapons Convention) and looked forward to a full and thorough investigation.³³⁴

In the subsequent meetings under this agenda item, discussions were focused on the meetings of the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague. On 18 April 2018, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs informed the Council that the United Kingdom had requested technical assistance from the OPCW Technical Secretariat under article VIII of the Chemical Weapons Convention. She also informed the Council that the Director General of OPCW had deployed a technical assistance team to the

United Kingdom in late March 2018. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs also stated that the results of the analysis by the OPCW-designated laboratories of the environmental and biomedical samples collected by the OPCW technical assistance team confirmed the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury on 4 March and that this was transmitted, on 12 April 2018, in a report of the Technical Secretariat to the United Kingdom and to all other States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.³³⁵ At the same meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation stated that there was nothing in the OPCW report that supported the British version of the involvement of the Russian Federation in the Salisbury incident and that the speedy analysis conducted by OPCW only confirmed that such a substance could have been produced in any laboratory that had the right equipment.³³⁶

On 5 September 2018, the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom transmitted to the President of the Security Council a statement made by the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom to Parliament on 5 September 2018 concerning the investigation into the attack in Salisbury of 4 March 2018.³³⁷ At the Council meeting on 6 September 2018, the representative of the United Kingdom informed the Council that, while the Skripals were recovering, two other persons had fallen ill after being exposed to Novichok in Amesbury, resulting in the passing of one of them on 8 July 2018. The representative of the United Kingdom also noted that the OPCW independent expert laboratories had again confirmed the identification by the United Kingdom of the Novichok nerve agent and that charges had been brought against two Russian nationals by the Crown Prosecution Service. She further stated that the Government of the United Kingdom had concluded that the two individuals named in the police investigation were in fact officers of the Russian military intelligence service.³³⁸ The representative of the Russian Federation firmly rejected the “groundless accusations” of his country’s involvement in the poisoning by toxic chemicals in Salisbury in March 2018 and stated that the Russian Federation had never developed, produced or stockpiled the toxic chemicals referred to as Novichok.³³⁹

³³⁰ S/2018/218, annex.

³³¹ S/PV.8203, p. 2.

³³² Ibid., p. 8.

³³³ Ibid., pp. 4–5 (France), p. 5 (Kuwait), p. 6 (Poland), p. 6 (Peru), pp. 6–7 (Sweden) and pp. 10–11 (Netherlands).

³³⁴ Ibid., p. 5 (Kuwait), p. 7 (Sweden), p. 7 (Kazakhstan) and p. 7 (Ethiopia).

³³⁵ S/PV.8237, p. 2.

³³⁶ Ibid., p. 12.

³³⁷ S/2018/814.

³³⁸ S/PV.8343, pp. 2–3.

³³⁹ Ibid., p. 11.

Meetings: Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/218)

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8203 14 March 2018	Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/218)				All Council members	
S/PV.8224 5 April 2018	Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/218)				All Council members	
S/PV.8237 18 April 2018	Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/218)			High Representative for Disarmament Affairs	All Council members, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs	
S/PV.8343 6 September 2018	Letter dated 13 March 2018 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/218)				All Council members	

Middle East

23. The situation in the Middle East

During the period under review, the Security Council held 47 open meetings in relation to the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”.³⁴⁰ In 2018, most meetings held under the item took the form of briefings.³⁴¹ In the context of those meetings, the Council considered a variety of topics, principally, the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, the conflict in Yemen, the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). The Council also met once, in January 2018, to consider the developments in the Islamic Republic of Iran. During the period under review, the Council adopted seven resolutions and issued one presidential statement in connection with the item. The Council, however, failed to adopt four draft resolutions in relation to the situations in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen owing to the negative vote of one or more permanent members of the Council in two cases and the failure to obtain the required number of votes in the other two cases. In addition, the Council held three closed meetings with countries contributing troops and police to UNDOF and UNIFIL.³⁴² More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the tables below.

The meetings in the Council during the period under review in relation to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic focused on three defined aspects: the political process to end the conflict; the proliferation and use of chemical weapons; and the humanitarian situation in the country. With regard to the political process, the Council heard monthly briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, who updated the Council on the efforts aimed at reaching a political agreement and de-escalating the conflict. The Special Envoy gave a briefing to the Council on the

progress of the Geneva consultations, the Astana arrangements and the Congress of the Syrian National Dialogue, held in Sochi, Russian Federation, in January 2018. He also gave a briefing to the Council on other developments concerning the armed conflict in the country and, in particular, the implementation of resolution 2401 (2018) of 24 February 2018, in which the Council had demanded the cessation of hostilities for a 30-day humanitarian pause.³⁴³ Other developments covered were the ceasefire agreement reached in Duma in March 2018 between the military of the Russian Federation, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam), as well as the agreement between the Russian Federation and Turkey of 17 September 2018 to establish a demilitarized zone in Idlib. The Special Envoy also gave a briefing to the Council on the negotiations on and challenges to the formation of the constitutional committee agreed to in the final statement of the Congress of the Syrian National Dialogue.³⁴⁴ According to the statement, a constitutional committee would be formed to draft a constitutional reform as a contribution to the political settlement under the auspices of the United Nations in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015), and would comprise “at the very least” the Government, opposition representatives in the intra-Syrian talks, Syrian experts, civil society, independents, tribal leaders and women.³⁴⁵

With respect to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Council heard regular briefings by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her Deputy on the progress in the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The briefings focused on the process of the destruction of the two remaining chemical weapons production facilities, as well as the work of the fact-finding mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to investigate the alleged use of chemical weapons by the Government and non-State actors. The briefings also addressed the viability of establishing an accountability mechanism

³⁴⁰ The provisional agenda for the 8209th meeting was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes (see [S/PV.8209](#)). For more information on the adoption of the agenda, see part II, sect. II.A.

³⁴¹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

³⁴² Under the item entitled “Meeting of the Security Council with troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution 1353(2001), annex II, sections A and B”, the Council held two meetings in relation to UNDOF, on 14 June 2018 (see [S/PV.8286](#)) and 11 December 2018 (see [S/PV.8417](#)); and one meeting in relation to UNIFIL, on 9 August 2018 (see [S/PV.8326](#)).

³⁴³ Resolution 2401 (2018), para. 1.

³⁴⁴ Letter dated 14 February 2018 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ([S/2018/121](#)), annex.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 4.