



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**Security Council Arria-Formula Meeting on
upholding International Law in situations of armed conflict
Wednesday 16 September 2026**

Greece's Statement delivered
by Mr Michael Stellakatos Loverdos, Legal Counsellor

Thank you Mr. President,

I would also like to thank the briefers and the Mission of Pakistan for organizing this Arria formula meeting.

The four Geneva Conventions, as well as the Additional Protocols thereto, provide a comprehensive framework for the protection of the most vulnerable in times of armed conflict. Other provisions relating to the methods and means of warfare, such as those contained in the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols, further regulate the conduct of hostilities. Despite this comprehensive legal framework, implementation of and compliance with international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law remain far from being fully achieved.

Figures provided in the annual reports of the Secretary General are telling in this regard. The findings are deeply alarming and reflect an ongoing erosion of respect for international law, including IHL and human rights law. 37,000 civilian deaths were recorded in 2025. More importantly, over the past year, violations of IHL against children in armed conflict reached unprecedented levels. The UN verified that such violations affected 24,174 children, the highest number ever recorded. Moreover, the widespread looting and destruction of cultural and religious heritage in occupied areas is another matter of serious concern, as such acts violate international law and contribute to efforts to alter and erase the character of occupied areas, in disregard of relevant Security Council resolutions.

Mr. President,

Ending impunity is essential to preventing future violations. To this end States must support independent, thorough, transparent and effective investigations, as well as accountability mechanisms at the national level and, where necessary, at the regional and international levels.

Greece considers fact-finding to be an essential first step towards ensuring compliance with IHL. The good offices of the International Humanitarian Fact Finding Commission, established under Article 90 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions are an important tool in this regard. Equally, Greece is very much supportive of the International Independent and Impartial Mechanism (IIIM) for Syria and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar, both of which contribute to the collection and preservation of evidence with a view to future prosecutions for war crimes; the latter in the context also of the *Gambia v. Myanmar* case before the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Moreover, as a long-standing supporter of international criminal justice and of the International Criminal Court (ICC) since its establishment, Greece believes that universal acceptance of the Court's jurisdiction would strengthen both accountability and the implementation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

I would like to conclude by highlighting two points concerning the implementation of IHL.

First, with regard to grave violations against children in armed conflict, Greece strongly condemns all such violations. Greece underlines that all feasible measures shall be undertaken to ensure that children receive the special protection to which they are entitled under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. Equally, we underscore that parties to armed conflict shall take concrete measures to protect education from attacks, refrain from the military use of schools and support continued access to safe education.

Second, in relation to Conflict Related Sexual Violence (CRSV), Greece strongly condemns these heinous crimes in the strongest possible terms. All parties to a conflict must immediately cease such acts and adopt time-bound and effective measures to prevent and address such crimes. The critical importance of documenting and substantiating such crimes underlines the need to ensure unhindered access for relevant UN monitoring mechanisms. Sexual violence should be a stand-alone designation criterion in every UN sanctions regime — not folded into other categories, but named for what it is. This matters most in addressing repeat offenders.

To conclude, Mr. President, we wish to underline that the most important issues regarding IHL are its implementation and accountability for violations of its provisions. Only accountability can ensure non-repetition — and only accountability can deliver to victims and survivors what they are rightfully entitled: justice.

I thank you