Resolution 1540 remains as important to international security today as when it was negotiated over twenty years ago: UK statement at the UN Security Council

16.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

Statement by Jennifer MacNaughtan, UK Minister Counsellor, at the Security Council meeting on the 1540 Committee.

Let me begin by thanking Panama for its stewardship of the 1540 Committee in 2025, including through the creation of the first voluntary technical reference guide on national export controls.

I will make four points.

First, resolution 1540 remains as important to international security today as when it was negotiated over twenty years ago.

It remains the only universal, legally-binding instrument that obliges all states to prevent non-state actors, including terrorist groups and criminal networks, from acquiring nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery.

The rapid diffusion of new and advanced technologies across the globe has made this threat more acute, not less.

Full implementation of the resolution therefore remains a long-term task, and the United Kingdom calls on all States to implement their obligations under this resolution in full.

Second, the United Kingdom welcomes the constructive consensus that made it possible to agree this year’s Programme of Work, which, as we have regrettably seen in recent years, cannot be taken for granted.

We encourage this consensus to further strengthen core national measures essential for the resolution’s implementation, such as export and trans-shipment controls, enforcement provisions, control lists for sensitive dual-use items, and sustained assistance to States.

Third, the United Kingdom agrees with the 1540 Committee’s report on the importance of an active and fully staffed Group of Experts.

Outreach is critical for the Group of Experts to execute its functions, including by providing insight and technical support to Member States in their implementation of resolution 1540.

We remain concerned that unwarranted objections have continued to prevent the Group of Experts from attending outreach events focused on thematic and regional implementation issues.

Any action that might hinder the Committee’s vital work should be reversed immediately.

Fourth, the United Kingdom remains committed to assisting States in improving their national implementation.

We will continue to offer our legal and regulatory expertise on 1540-related matters, and we will continue to contribute to wider security efforts that indirectly bolster 1540 implementation, such as the UK's ongoing financial and programmatic support to UNODA's Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention work, including universalisation outreach.

Madam President, as we look ahead to the Comprehensive Review in 2027, we encourage all Council Members to participate fully in preparations.

With threats evolving rapidly, the Review is our opportunity to develop clear recommendations to strengthen the resolution and ensure support is directed to the states that need it most.

In that regard, the United Kingdom reaffirms the importance of ensuring that all UNSC subsidiary bodies, including the 1540 Committee, are swiftly allocated chairs.

https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/resolution-1540-remains-as-important-to-international-security-today-as-when-it-was-negotiated-over-twenty-years-ago-uk-statement-at-the-un-security