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## **Part II**

### **Provisional rules of procedure and related procedural developments**

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## Introductory note

Part II of the present Supplement covers the practice of the Security Council in relation to its provisional rules of procedure and relevant Articles of the Charter of the United Nations. Since the provisional rules of procedure are routinely applied by the Council at its formal meetings, the focus of part II is on special applications of the rules in the proceedings of the Council, rather than on the standard applications of the rules.

In the present Supplement, owing to the major impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on the functioning of the Council, part II includes a new section devoted exclusively to the numerous innovations introduced as of March 2020. From 12 March to 14 July 2020, the Council suspended the holding of meetings in person in the Security Council Chamber. Council members instead initiated the practice of holding videoconferences in open and in closed formats as a means of continuing the work of the Council. From 14 July until the end of the year, the work of the Council was conducted using hybrid model, alternating in-person meetings with videoconferences. In 2020, videoconferences, whether open or closed, were not considered formal meetings of the Council. This had a direct impact on the application of the provisional rules of procedure and on the ability of the Council to vote.

As a result, Council members agreed that resolutions would be adopted through a written procedure, the outcome of which would be announced in a videoconference and would have the same legal status as those voted on in the Security Council Chamber. In addition, Council members agreed that presidential statements would be issued following a no-objection procedure and subsequently announced at an open videoconference and would have the same status as those adopted in the Security Council Chamber. While Council members agreed on procedures for the adoption of draft resolutions and the issuance of presidential statements, no procedure was agreed upon for procedural votes.

Part II is divided into 11 sections. Section I provides an overview of the procedural developments and the working methods agreed upon by the members of the Council following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following previous supplements, sections II to XI are divided in the order of the relevant chapters of the provisional rules of procedure, as follows: section II, meetings and records (Article 28 of the Charter and rules 1–5 and 48–57); section III, agenda (rules 6–12); section IV, representation and credentials (rules 13–17); section V, presidency (rules 18–20); section VI, Secretariat (rules 21–26); section VII, conduct of business (rules 27, 29–30 and 33); section VIII, participation (Articles 31–32 of the Charter and rules 37 and 39); section IX, decision-making and voting (Article 27 of the Charter and rules 31–32, 34–36, 38 and 40); section X, languages (rules 41–47); and section XI, status of the provisional rules of procedure (Article 30 of the Charter).

The remaining rules are covered in other parts of the present Supplement, as follows: rule 28, concerning subsidiary organs of the Council, in parts IX and X, and concerning Council missions, in part VI; and rule 61, concerning relations with other United Nations organs, in part IV.

During the period under review, there were no instances of the application of rules 58 to 60 concerning the admission of new Members, and the present Supplement therefore contains no material relating to those rules.

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During the period under review, the Council held a total of 81 meetings, of which 79 were public and 2 were private. The members of the Council held 46 informal consultations of the whole in 2020. In accordance with the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the members of the Council also held 269 videoconferences, of which 143 were open and 126 were closed. Council members continued to hold informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the Arria-formula meetings and half of the informal interactive dialogues were held virtually by videoconference. The Council continued to expand the practice of holding informal “wrap-up” sessions at the end of the month, except for the month of March, when no wrap-up sessions were held. Similarly, most wrap-up sessions were held virtually owing to the lack of in-person meetings.

In 2020, the Council was seized of 69 agenda items and considered 42 items, compared with 49 in 2019. Of the 42 items considered by the Council in 2020, 23 concerned country-specific and regional situations and 19 dealt with thematic and other issues.<sup>1</sup>

During the period under review, the Council adopted 57 resolutions and issued 13 statements by the President. The Council also issued 11 notes by the President and 242 letters from the President. Four draft resolutions were not adopted owing to the lack of the required nine affirmative votes and three draft resolutions were not adopted because of the negative vote of a permanent member. In 2020, an objection to the extension of an invitation pursuant to rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure led to a procedural vote on one occasion.

Aspects relating to the working methods of the Council continued to be raised and discussed by Council members, in particular at an open videoconference<sup>2</sup> on working methods held on 15 May in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)” (see cases 1, 3, 4, 5 and 7). Participants exchanged views on how to ensure transparency, efficiency, inclusivity and interactivity in the work of the Council, in particular as that related to the format of Council meetings, the agenda, the role of the Council presidency, participation in Council meetings and other activities, and inclusivity and burden-sharing in the decision-making process. Members and non-members of the Council also discussed the features and further development of the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During the period under review, from 17 to 19 January, members of the Council also held an informal retreat<sup>3</sup> on the working methods of the Council, organized by Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Kuwait as the incoming and former Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, respectively. As part of the discussion, Council members addressed, among other issues, the implementation of the note by the President dated 30 August 2017, how to strike a balance between transparency and efficiency in the work of the Council, intra-Council dynamics, the process of drafting outcome documents and the issue of penholdership, and best practices relating to the Council’s relationship with the wider membership, other United Nations organs and regional organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> In 2020, the Council considered one item, entitled “Election of five members of the International Court of Justice”, that had not been on the list of items of which the Council was seized (see [S/PV.8773](#)). See also [S/2020/10](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [S/2020/418](#).

<sup>3</sup> See [S/2020/172](#).

## I. Procedural developments during the coronavirus disease pandemic

### Note

The Council held 52 meetings between 1 January and 11 March 2020. Following the declaration by the World Health Organization of the COVID-19 pandemic on 11 March 2020 and the subsequent decision of the Secretary-General on 16 March 2020 to restrict presence in the United Nations Headquarters to essential personnel only,<sup>4</sup> the members of the Council agreed to adopt a series of new working methods, including new procedures for the adoption of resolutions, to allow the work of the Council to be carried out virtually and ensure the continuity of its mandate. Accordingly, the Council did not hold any in-person meetings from 12 March to 14 July and instead convened 128 videoconferences.<sup>5</sup> From 14 July until the end of the year, the Council held in-person meetings and videoconferences interchangeably.

From 14 July to 5 October, in-person meetings were held in the Economic and Social Council Chamber instead of the Security Council Chamber in order to ensure the necessary social distancing consistent with the health and safety guidelines agreed upon by the respective presidencies of the Council in coordination with the Secretary-General.<sup>6</sup> On

8 October, in-person meetings resumed in the Security Council Chamber.<sup>7</sup> In November, Council members agreed that the use of the Economic and Social Council Chamber remained an option for in-person meetings so as to provide flexibility.<sup>8</sup> In-person informal consultations were also held in the Economic and Social Council Chamber and Security Council Chamber instead of the Consultations Room.

Section I covers the practices and procedures developed by the Council in relation to its working methods during the COVID-19 pandemic. It comprises four subsections, on new working methods, videoconferences, participation and decision-making and voting.

### A. New working methods

From March to December 2020, each President of the Council outlined, in a letter addressed to the representatives of the members of the Council, the working methods agreed upon by Council members for the month, usually maintaining and building on the measures outlined in previous months. Table 1 below lists all the letters of the President of the Council circulated in 2020 concerning the working methods of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>4</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>5</sup> The Council held its 8745th meeting in person on 12 March ([S/PV.8745](#)) and its 8746th meeting in person on 14 July ([S/PV.8746](#)). For more information on the meetings of the Council in 2020, see sect. II below.

<sup>6</sup> See [S/2020/639](#), [S/2020/778](#) and [S/2020/877](#).

<sup>7</sup> See [S/2020/966](#) and [S/2020/1077](#).

<sup>8</sup> See [S/2020/1077](#).

Table 1

**Letters from the President of the Security Council addressed to the representatives of the members of the Council in 2020 concerning working methods during the COVID-19 pandemic**

<i>Date</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Presidency</i>	<i>Summary of working methods agreed upon</i>
27 March 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/253</a>	Letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Written procedure for the adoption of resolutions</li><li>• Procedure for convening videoconferences</li><li>• Announcement of videoconferences</li><li>• Participation of non-members of the Council</li><li>• Videoconference records</li></ul>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Presidency</i>	<i>Summary of working methods agreed upon</i>
2 April 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/273</a>	Letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Dominican Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure for convening videoconferences</li> <li>• Informal videoconference plan</li> <li>• Videoconference nomenclature</li> <li>• Announcement of videoconferences</li> <li>• Live streaming of open videoconferences</li> <li>• Adoption of the agenda (rule 9)</li> <li>• Accreditation of representatives (rule 13)</li> <li>• Participation of rule 37 invitees</li> <li>• Participation of rule 39 invitees</li> <li>• Languages of videoconferences</li> <li>• Videoconference records</li> <li>• Outcomes of videoconferences</li> <li>• Procedure for the adoption of presidential statements</li> <li>• Conduct of videoconferences</li> </ul>
7 May 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/372</a>	Letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal programme of work</li> <li>• Videoconference nomenclature</li> <li>• Adoption of the agenda (rule 9)</li> <li>• Accreditation of representatives (rule 13)</li> <li>• Conduct of business under chapter VI of the provisional rules of procedure</li> <li>• Participation of non-Council members</li> <li>• Announcement of videoconferences</li> <li>• Videoconference records</li> <li>• Live streaming of open videoconferences</li> <li>• Outcomes of videoconferences</li> <li>• Written procedure for the adoption of resolutions</li> <li>• Procedure for the adoption of presidential statements</li> </ul>

## Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2020

<i>Date</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Presidency</i>	<i>Summary of working methods agreed upon</i>
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct of videoconferences</li> <li>• Subsidiary organs</li> </ul>
2 June 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/490</a>	Letter dated 2 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of the guidelines agreed upon under previous presidencies, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/372</a>)</li> </ul>
1 July 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/639</a>	Letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modalities of in-person meetings of the Security Council for July 2020 in the Economic and Social Council Chamber</li> </ul>
4 August 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/778</a>	Letter dated 4 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Indonesia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of the working methods of previous presidencies, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/372</a>) and of the modalities of in-person meetings of the Council, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/639</a>)</li> </ul>
2 September 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/877</a>	Letter dated 2 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Niger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of the working methods of previous presidencies, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/372</a>) and of the modalities of in-person meetings of the Council, as set out in the letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/639</a>), as well as the letter dated 4 August 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/778</a>) and its additional note</li> <li>• Languages in videoconferences</li> </ul>
1 October 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/966</a>	Letter dated 1 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Russian Federation	<p>Extension of the working methods of previous presidencies, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/372</a>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modalities of in-person meetings of the Council for October 2020 in the Security Council Chamber</li> </ul>



<i>Date</i>	<i>Symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Presidency</i>	<i>Summary of working methods agreed upon</i>
2 November 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/1077</a>	Letter dated 2 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	<p>Extension of the working methods of previous presidencies, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council (<a href="#">S/2020/372</a>), for Council work conducted virtually</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of the working methods set out in the annex to the letter dated 1 October 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/966</a>) for in-person meetings in the Security Council Chamber</li> <li>• Prioritization of multilingualism</li> <li>• Interaction and engagement with non-Council members</li> </ul>
3 December 2020	<a href="#">S/2020/1163</a>	Letter dated 3 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extension of the working methods of previous presidencies, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/372</a>), and of the modalities of in-person meetings of the Council, as set out in the annex to the letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Council (<a href="#">S/2020/639</a>)</li> </ul>

The letters from the President of the Council dated 27 March and 2 April 2020 provided that the measures agreed upon therein were “temporary, extraordinary and provisional” to enable the Council to discharge its mandate and would not be considered as a precedent in the future.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, the letters dated 7 May, 2 June, 4 August, 2 September, 2 November and 3 December 2020 indicated that the methods and modalities of work were only responses to the exceptional and extraordinary circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>10</sup> and would not set a precedent for the future.<sup>11</sup> All of the letters established that the implementation of the agreed upon measures would be assessed and further renewed, adjusted or discontinued, subject to agreement among all Council members.

Furthermore, the letter from the President of the Council dated 2 April provided that there was “no

agreement to consider the discussions of the Council held on the virtual platform as formal meetings”.<sup>12</sup> The letter also confirmed that the work of the Council would be undertaken “in the spirit of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure”, ensuring that Council members participating in a virtual Council discussion were represented by appropriately credentialed delegates, pursuant to rule 13 of the provisional rules of procedure; that the agenda was adopted at the outset of each videoconference, pursuant to rule 9; and that any other relevant rules were to be observed as a matter of practice, under chapter VI of the provisional rules of procedure (rules 27–39).<sup>13</sup> It was also established that videoconferences would be conducted on the items reflected in the “informal video-conference plan”, also referred to as the informal plan, issued by the presidency of the Council after consultation with Council members during the first working day of the presidency. The informal plan would include the open and closed videoconferences

<sup>9</sup> See [S/2020/253](#) and [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>10</sup> See [S/2020/372](#), [S/2020/490](#), [S/2020/778](#), [S/2020/877](#) and [S/2020/1163](#).

<sup>11</sup> See [S/2020/1077](#).

<sup>12</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* See also [S/2020/372](#).

that usually appeared as briefings and consultations in the informal programme of work of the Council.<sup>14</sup>

The letters from the President dated 1 July and 1 October laid out the modalities for the convening of in-person meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Economic and Social Council Chamber and the Security Council Chamber, respectively.<sup>15</sup> The letter dated 1 July noted that, in the light of the positive developments regarding the containment of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council intended to undertake a gradual and phased shift towards in-person meetings at Headquarters and laid out the modalities concerning location, access, health and security for convening in the Economic and Social Council Chamber in July 2020.<sup>16</sup> The letter clarified that, for in-person meetings, the provisional rules of procedure applied. In addition, upon receiving a request from a member of the Council for a meeting to be convened at Headquarters, the presidency would consult with members to achieve a consensual decision. The letter dated 1 July and the subsequent letters in 2020 stated that Council members had agreed that the decision to convene in-person meetings on the premises of the United Nations Headquarters rested with the Council, subject to revision, adjustment or suspension.<sup>17</sup>

By a letter dated 1 October, the President of the Council indicated that the plan was to conduct by default meetings in the “traditional format foreseen by the Charter of the United Nations and the provisional rules of procedure of the Council”. The letter also laid out the protocol for the presence of Council members in the Security Council Chamber and the modalities for in-person meetings in October 2020. Regarding incoming Council members, the letter provided that they would be entitled to two observers’ places in the Chamber assigned by the Secretariat during both meetings and informal consultations without setting a precedent for the times when the consultations of the Council were conducted in the Consultations Room.<sup>18</sup>

## B. Videoconferences

From 24 March to 14 July 2020, the Council held public and private discussions exclusively by videoconference. From 14 July until the end of the

year, videoconferences were held interchangeably with in-person meetings (on average, Council members held 7 meetings and 22 open videoconferences per month).

## Nomenclature

In a letter from the President of the Council dated 2 April, it was specified that the nomenclature to be utilized for the virtual discussions would be as follows: “open video teleconference on [item on the agenda to be discussed]”, followed by “closed video teleconference on [item on the agenda to be discussed]”. In addition, consultations would be referred to as “closed video teleconference on [item on the agenda to be discussed]”.<sup>19</sup> Subsequently, in a letter dated 7 May, in addition to the established terminology, the President of the Council made reference to “video teleconference meetings”, “video teleconference briefings”, and “video teleconference consultations”.<sup>20</sup> However, these terms were not used in the provisional informal programme of work. Instead, the provisional informal programme of work made reference to “Open VTC” and “Closed VTC”, and “Adoption” for the announcement of votes held in accordance with the agreed written procedure, as described in further detail in subsection D below. As of November 2020, the informal provisional programme of work introduced a new nomenclature using “VTC” followed by the formats of public meetings of the Council provided for in paragraph 21 of the annex to the note by the President dated 30 August 2017.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the informal provisional programme of work made reference to “VTC briefing”, “VTC debate” and “VTC open debate”. In addition, the informal provisional programme of work made reference to “VTC consultations” for consultations held by videoconference and “Adoption” for the announcement of votes held in accordance with the agreed written procedure.<sup>22</sup>

## Languages

Owing to technical constraints, virtual discussions held by videoconference were initially

<sup>14</sup> See [S/2020/273](#). See also [S/2020/372](#) concerning the “informal programme of work of the Council” for May 2020.

<sup>15</sup> See [S/2020/639](#) and [S/2020/966](#).

<sup>16</sup> See [S/2020/639](#).

<sup>17</sup> See [S/2020/639](#), [S/2020/778](#), [S/2020/877](#), [S/2020/966](#), [S/2020/1077](#) and [S/2020/1163](#).

<sup>18</sup> See [S/2020/966](#).

<sup>19</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>20</sup> See [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>21</sup> See [S/2017/507](#).

<sup>22</sup> See [S/2021/203](#). During 2020, the provisional programme of work was referred to differently depending on the presidency for the month, as “informal plan” (in April 2020), “provisional informal programme of work” (in May 2020), “informal provisional programme of work” (in May, June, July, August, September and November 2020) and “provisional programme of work” (in October and December 2020).

conducted only in English.<sup>23</sup> Starting on 31 August, Council members commenced the use of a remote interpretation platform for open videoconferences. By a letter dated 2 September 2020, the President of the Council announced that during its presidency, his delegation intended to conduct the business of the Council and deliver its national statements in its official language. In that connection, the deployment of the interpretation platform to allow Council members to speak in their official languages was strongly encouraged.<sup>24</sup> By a letter dated 2 November 2020, the President of the Council noted that Council members had agreed to prioritize multilingualism for greater effectiveness and involvement at meetings.<sup>25</sup> While agreement was reached among Council members to have interpretation available in open videoconferences, no similar agreement was reached for closed videoconferences, including closed videoconferences of subsidiary organs.

In 2020, the Council held a total of 269 videoconferences, of which 143 were open and 126 were closed. For further details, see the annex below.

## Formats

### *Open videoconferences*

The Council's practice in connection with open videoconferences evolved during the period under review, progressively enhancing participation and transparency. The evolution was largely explained by the impact of the pandemic on the operation of the United Nations Headquarters and the measures adopted in conjunction with the Secretariat to mitigate the impact and ensure the continued functioning of the Council.

In a letter from the President of the Council dated 27 March 2020, it was established that the President of the Council would announce to the public and Member States, 24 hours in advance, the intention to schedule videoconferences of members of the Council. Furthermore, the letter provided that: (a) the President could invite Member States that were not members of the Council to participate in a videoconference of members of the Council, "when the interests of that Member [were] specially affected and there [were] no objections from any Council member"; and (b) to ensure the transparency of those videoconferences, the

President would, within 48 hours, circulate as a document of the Council a compilation of the interventions of the briefers and members and non-members of the Council participating in the videoconference who requested the inclusion of their statements in the document. The letter specified, however, that "this would not apply to videoconferences of the members of the Council that were announced in advance as closed videoconferences".<sup>26</sup>

In a letter dated 2 April 2020, it was established that: (a) the President would invite Member States, members of the Secretariat or individuals who were not members of the Council to participate in a videoconference "within the principles of rules 37 and 39" of the provisional rules of procedure if there were no objections from Council members; (b) the President would share with the wider membership of the United Nations, one day before the event and through email, a message in which the videoconference would be announced (the message would also be available to the wider membership and the general public in the programme of work on the website of the Council); and (c) open videoconferences, when substituting a regular briefing of the Council, would be divided into two parts. The first part would be a public live feed of the relevant briefings, moderated by the President of the Council and streamed by United Nations webcast and, at its conclusion, the President would invite the Council to hold either an open or a closed videoconference, which would not be webcast. The letter further provided that the second part of the open videoconferences would be fully webcast as soon as technically feasible.<sup>27</sup> As a result, from 7 to 16 April, webcasts of the first part of the videoconferences were made available.<sup>28</sup> As of 21 April, open videoconferences were webcast in their entirety.<sup>29</sup>

On 27 April, the Council held its first open videoconference with extensive participation of non-Council members, similar to an open debate as provided for in paragraph 21 of the note by the President dated 30 August 2017.<sup>30</sup> However, given the technical limitations imposed by videoconferences, it was agreed that participation by non-members of the Council would be limited to the submission of written

<sup>23</sup> See [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#). Nonetheless, under the presidency of France in June 2020, the members of the Council delivered statements in videoconferences in English and French (see, for example, [S/2020/514](#)).

<sup>24</sup> See [S/2020/877](#).

<sup>25</sup> See [S/2020/1077](#).

<sup>26</sup> See [S/2020/253](#).

<sup>27</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>28</sup> See [S/2020/286](#), [S/2020/305](#) and [S/2020/313](#).

<sup>29</sup> See the letter of the President of the Council dated 23 April 2020 compiling the statements of the first open videoconference for which a webcast was provided, held on 21 April in connection with the item "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" ([S/2020/340](#)).

<sup>30</sup> See [S/2017/507](#).

statements. The open videoconference was held in connection with the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security” and focused on youth and peace and security. In accordance with the understanding reached by Council members regarding the videoconference and consistent with the procedures established in the letters from the President dated 27 March and 2 April 2020,<sup>31</sup> the Presidency circulated a letter compiling the statements delivered by the briefers, Council members and non-Council members, as well as the written statements submitted by other entities.<sup>32</sup>

In a letter from the President of the Council dated 7 May 2020, it was established that: (a) participation in videoconferences would be open to non-members of the Council to deliver statements orally as soon as it became technically feasible; (b) all open videoconferences would be streamed by United Nations webcast in full; and (c) members and non-members of the Council were invited to send statements to the presidency as soon as possible, and no later than the day of the meeting, for inclusion in the compilation document containing the interventions of the briefers and those of the members and non-members of the Council participating in the videoconference.<sup>33</sup> The technical limitations for the participation of large numbers of non-Council members in open videoconferences persisted during the period under review. Moreover, once in-person meetings resumed, participation by non-Council members in open debates was restricted because of the necessary health and safety guidelines. Therefore, non-Council members continued to participate in open debates by submitting written statements.

#### *Closed videoconferences*

The Council’s practice concerning closed videoconferences remained largely unchanged from March to December 2020. In a letter from the President of the Council dated 27 March 2020, it was established that certain virtual discussions of the Council would be announced as closed videoconferences, in which Member States who were not members of the Council would not be invited to participate. The letter further established that the procedure for publishing statements from Member States would not apply to closed videoconferences.<sup>34</sup> In a letter from the President of the Council dated 2 April 2020, it was established that, to the extent possible and in

agreement with Council members, the Presidency would facilitate the negotiation of press statements or elements for the press after every Council discussion and that the President would thereafter orally deliver any agreed elements for the press through United Nations webcast.<sup>35</sup> In a letter from the President of the Council dated 7 May 2020, it was confirmed that closed videoconferences would not be webcast.<sup>36</sup>

#### **Other informal meetings of the members of the Security Council held by videoconference**

In addition to the open and closed videoconferences convened in lieu of in-person meetings and informal consultations of the whole, Council members also held six informal interactive dialogues and 18 out of 22 Arria-formula meetings by videoconference in 2020.<sup>37</sup>

### **C. Participation**

As reflected in the letters from the President of the Council listed in table 1, non-members of the Council were invited to participate in videoconferences as of March 2020 “when the interests of that Member [were] specially affected and there [were] no objections from any Council member” and as of April 2020 “within the principles of rules 37 and 39” if there were no objections from Council members.<sup>38</sup> As explained above, given the technical limitations imposed by videoconferences and the health and safety guidelines implemented for in-person meetings, participation by non-members of the Council decreased significantly during the period under review.<sup>39</sup> However, in accordance with letters from the President of the Council dated 27 March, 2 April and 7 May 2020, the written statements of non-Council members who requested to participate in videoconferences were circulated as part of the compilation documents annexed to letters from the President of the Council.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>35</sup> See [S/2020/273](#). See also [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>36</sup> See [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>37</sup> For more information on informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings held in 2020, see sect. II.C below.

<sup>38</sup> See [S/2020/253](#) and [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>39</sup> For more information on participation in 2020, see sect. VIII below.

<sup>40</sup> See [S/2020/253](#), [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#). See also [S/2020/906](#), transmitting a compilation of statements of non-members of the Council in connection with the 8756th meeting of the Council, held on 10 September under the item entitled “Children and armed conflict” (see [S/PV.8756](#)).

<sup>31</sup> See [S/2020/253](#) and [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>32</sup> See [S/2020/346](#).

<sup>33</sup> See [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>34</sup> See [S/2020/253](#).



## D. Decision-making and voting

### Resolutions

Following the decision to suspend in-person meetings in the Security Council Chamber in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, by a letter from the President of the Council dated 27 March 2020 it was agreed that Council resolutions would be adopted through a written procedure. The letter indicated that following a request from a Council member or members presenting a draft resolution in blue, the President would circulate a letter to members of the Council announcing that the draft resolution, to be included in the letter as an annex, would be put to a vote, and requesting Council members to provide their votes in writing within a non-extendable period of 24 hours.<sup>41</sup> In addition, there would be an announcement in the Council's programme of work that the process was under way. The draft resolution would be translated into the six official languages of the United Nations before the end of the 24-hour period.

Within the 24-hour period, every delegation would send the Director of the Security Council Affairs Division a letter from its permanent representative or chargé d'affaires, submitted electronically to the Division, indicating its vote (in favour, against or abstention) on the draft resolution and, if applicable, an explanation of vote. The Division would acknowledge receipt, keep votes confidential during that period and communicate the result to the President of the Security Council upon the expiry of the 24-hour voting period. The Council member or members presenting the resolution would not be able to withdraw or amend the resolution once the voting period had begun. Any delegation that failed to respond within the 24-hour voting period would be considered to have been absent from the vote.<sup>42</sup>

Within three hours following the conclusion of the voting period, the President of the Council would circulate a letter listing the vote of each delegation and the outcome to all Council members and any Member States concerned. If the draft resolution was adopted, the President would also submit the outcome to the Security Council Affairs Division, which would then circulate the resolution to all Council members and Member States concerned. Upon receipt of the outcome, Council members would have six hours to submit a written explanation of their vote. The Member States

concerned would also be able to submit a written statement with the agreement of the Council, in line with rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure. Within 12 hours of the conclusion of the voting period, the President would convene a videoconference of the Council to announce the outcome of the vote.<sup>43</sup>

In accordance with the letter from the President of the Council, resolutions adopted through the written voting procedure were to have the same legal status as those voted on in the Security Council Chamber. On 30 March 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2515 \(2020\)](#) in connection with the item entitled "Non-proliferation/ Democratic People's Republic of Korea", which was the first resolution adopted in accordance with the written voting procedure.<sup>44</sup> During the period under review, the Council adopted 34 resolutions under the written voting procedure out of a total of 57 resolutions adopted in 2020. Table 2 lists the resolutions adopted through the written voting procedure and table 3 lists draft resolutions and amendments considered under the written voting procedure but not adopted.

Departing from the procedure described above, in 2020 amendments were put to a vote within less than 24 hours. In four sequential letters circulated between 8 and 10 July, the President of the Council invoked rule 33 of the provisional rules of procedure, according to which a motion to introduce an amendment shall have precedence "over all principal motions and draft resolutions relative to the subject before the meeting". As provided for in the letters, taking into account the extraordinary circumstances in connection with the Council's practice and working methods, in particular the absence of "meetings" as referred to in rule 33, the President of the Council put various amendments to a vote in writing within a period of less than 24 hours. The amendments were proposed in relation to draft resolutions submitted in connection with the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East", and more specifically the renewal of the cross-border humanitarian mechanism established in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#).<sup>45</sup> The four amendments proposed were put to a vote sequentially and concurrently between 9 and 11 July within a 12-hour voting period.<sup>46</sup> As a result, the Council considered and did not adopt amendments to draft resolutions submitted by Belgium and Germany,<sup>47</sup> and by the Russian Federation<sup>48</sup> and China.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>41</sup> That agreement notwithstanding, the non-extendable voting period was, at times, adjusted to less than 24 hours based on the urgency of certain voting procedures. For example, the voting period on resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#) and the proposed draft amendments under the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East" ranged from 3 to 12 hours. See, for example, [S/2020/699](#), [S/2020/700](#), [S/2020/701](#) and [S/2020/702](#). A draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation, contained in document [S/2020/683](#), was put to a vote for a non-extendable period of two hours (see [S/2020/694](#)).

<sup>42</sup> See [S/2020/253](#).

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> See [S/2020/270](#).

<sup>45</sup> For more information, see part I, sect. 20.

<sup>46</sup> See [S/2020/669](#), [S/2020/699](#), [S/2020/700](#) and [S/2020/701](#).

<sup>47</sup> See [S/2020/667](#) and [S/2020/684](#). The draft resolution contained in document [S/2020/684](#) was nonetheless adopted as resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#), albeit not unanimously.

<sup>48</sup> See [S/2020/668](#), [S/2020/690](#) and [S/2020/691](#).

<sup>49</sup> See [S/2020/692](#).

Table 2  
Resolutions adopted by the Council through the written voting procedure, 2020

<i>Resolution and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Written records of voting procedure</i>	<i>Written records of voting outcome</i>
<a href="#">2515 (2020)</a> 30 March 2020	Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea	<a href="#">S/2020/270</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/246</a>
<a href="#">2516 (2020)</a> 30 March 2020	The situation in Somalia	<a href="#">S/2020/266</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/247</a>
<a href="#">2517 (2020)</a> 30 March 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<a href="#">S/2020/267</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/248</a>
<a href="#">2518 (2020)</a> 30 March 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	<a href="#">S/2020/268</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/249</a>
<a href="#">2519 (2020)</a> 14 May 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<a href="#">S/2020/408</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/405</a>
<a href="#">2520 (2020)</a> 29 May 2020	The situation in Somalia	<a href="#">S/2020/466</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/459</a>
<a href="#">2521 (2020)</a> 29 May 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<a href="#">S/2020/469</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/462</a>
<a href="#">2522 (2020)</a> 29 May 2020	The situation concerning Iraq	<a href="#">S/2020/467</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/460</a>
<a href="#">2523 (2020)</a> 29 May 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<a href="#">S/2020/468</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/461</a>
<a href="#">2524 (2020)</a> 3 June 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<a href="#">S/2020/496</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/494</a>
<a href="#">2525 (2020)</a> 3 June 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<a href="#">S/2020/497</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/495</a>
<a href="#">2526 (2020)</a> 5 June 2020	The situation in Libya	<a href="#">S/2020/509</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/504</a>
<a href="#">2527 (2020)</a> 22 June 2020	The situation in Somalia	<a href="#">S/2020/573</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/569</a>
<a href="#">2528 (2020)</a> 25 June 2020	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	<a href="#">S/2020/601</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/589</a>
<a href="#">2529 (2020)</a> 25 June 2020	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	<a href="#">S/2020/602</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/590</a>
<a href="#">2530 (2020)</a> 29 June 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/624</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/612</a>
<a href="#">2531 (2020)</a> 29 June 2020	The situation in Mali	<a href="#">S/2020/625</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/613</a>
<a href="#">2532 (2020)</a> 1 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<a href="#">S/2020/638</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/632</a>
<a href="#">2533 (2020)</a> 11 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/702</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/698</a>

<i>Resolution and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Written records of voting procedure</i>	<i>Written records of voting outcome</i>
<a href="#">2538 (2020)</a> 28 August 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	<a href="#">S/2020/856</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/851</a>
<a href="#">2539 (2020)</a> 28 August 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/857</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/853</a>
<a href="#">2540 (2020)</a> 28 August 2020	The situation in Somalia	<a href="#">S/2020/858</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/854</a>
<a href="#">2541 (2020)</a> 31 August 2020	The situation in Mali	<a href="#">S/2020/867</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/859</a>
<a href="#">2544 (2020)</a> 18 September 2020	Threats to international peace and security	<a href="#">S/2020/920</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/917</a>
<a href="#">2548 (2020)</a> 30 October 2020	The situation concerning Western Sahara	<a href="#">S/2020/1075</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1063</a>
<a href="#">2549 (2020)</a> 5 November 2020	The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	<a href="#">S/2020/1087</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1085</a>
<a href="#">2553 (2020)</a> 3 December 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<a href="#">S/2020/1167</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1166</a>
<a href="#">2554 (2020)</a> 4 December 2020	The situation in Somalia	<a href="#">S/2020/1173</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1170</a>
<a href="#">2555 (2020)</a> 18 December 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/1263</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1252</a>
<a href="#">2556 (2020)</a> 18 December 2020	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	<a href="#">S/2020/1265</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1253</a>
<a href="#">2557 (2020)</a> 18 December 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	<a href="#">S/2020/1266</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1254</a>
<a href="#">2558 (2020)</a> 21 December 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	<a href="#">S/2020/1273</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1269</a>
<a href="#">2559 (2020)</a> 22 December 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	<a href="#">S/2020/1280</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1276</a>
<a href="#">2560 (2020)</a> 29 December 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	<a href="#">S/2020/1311</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1305</a>

Table 3

**Draft resolutions and amendments considered by the Council under the written voting procedure but not adopted, 2020**

<i>Draft resolution or amendment and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Written records of voting procedure</i>	<i>Written records of voting outcome</i>
<a href="#">S/2020/654</a> 7 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/661</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/657</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/658</a> 8 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/671</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/664</a>

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<i>Draft resolution or amendment and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Written records of voting procedure</i>	<i>Written records of voting outcome</i>
<a href="#">S/2020/667</a> 10 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/693</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/681</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/668</a> (amendment to draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/667</a> ) 9 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/669</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/670</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/683</a> 10 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/694</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/688</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/690</a> (amendment to draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/684</a> ) 11 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/699</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/695</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/691</a> (amendment to draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/684</a> ) 11 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/700</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/696</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/692</a> (amendment to draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/684</a> ) 11 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/2020/701</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/697</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/797</a> 14 August 2020	Non-proliferation	<a href="#">S/2020/805</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/803</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/852</a> 31 August 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	<a href="#">S/2020/870</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/865</a>
<a href="#">S/2020/1054</a> 30 October 2020	Women and peace and security	<a href="#">S/2020/1076</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/1066</a>

### Presidential statements

By a letter from the President dated 2 April 2020, it was agreed that the adoption of statements by the President that had been electronically agreed upon by consensus following a no-objection procedure of no less than 48 hours, would be announced by the President during an open videoconference.<sup>50</sup> By a letter from the President dated 7 May 2020, the length of the no-objection procedure was modified to no less than 24 hours.<sup>51</sup> It was specified that the statements would

have the same status as those adopted in the Security Council Chamber and that they would be published as a document of the Council.<sup>52</sup> On 29 April, during an open videoconference held in connection with the item entitled “Protection of civilians in armed conflict”, the President announced for the first time the adoption of a presidential statement<sup>53</sup> in accordance with the procedure. As listed in table 4, out of a total of 13 presidential statements issued by the Council in 2020, four were issued under the procedure.

<sup>50</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>51</sup> See [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>52</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>53</sup> [S/PRST/2020/6](#).



Table 4

**Presidential statements issued by the Council through the written procedure, 2020**

<i>Presidential statement and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>
<a href="#">S/PRST/2020/6</a> 29 April 2020	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	No record <sup>a</sup>
<a href="#">S/PRST/2020/11</a> 4 December 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations	<a href="#">S/2020/1179</a>
<a href="#">S/PRST/2020/12</a> 4 December 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations	<a href="#">S/2020/1179</a>
<a href="#">S/PRST/2020/13</a> 21 December 2020	The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security	No record <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> See [A/75/2](#), part I, chap. IV.B. The Council adopted the presidential statement following its debate on 21 April (see [S/2020/340](#)).

<sup>b</sup> See [A/75/2](#), part I, chap. IV.B. The Council adopted the presidential statement following its debate on 18 December (see [S/2020/1286](#)).

**Procedural votes**

While the letter of the President of the Security Council dated 27 March 2020 provided for voting on draft resolutions,<sup>54</sup> no similar procedure was devised

<sup>54</sup> See [S/2020/253](#).

for procedural votes. Moreover, as mentioned above, videoconferences were not considered formal meetings of the Council and therefore procedural votes could not take place. Since procedural disagreements could not be addressed through voting, consensus became the norm in relation to all procedural questions.

## II. Meetings and records

### Note

Section II covers the practice of the Council concerning meetings, publicity and the records of the Council, in relation to Article 28 of the Charter of the United Nations and rules 1 to 5 and 48 to 57 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

#### Article 28

1. *The Security Council shall be so organized as to be able to function continuously. Each member of the Security Council shall for this purpose be represented at all times at the seat of the Organization.*

2. *The Security Council shall hold periodic meetings at which each of its members may, if it so desires, be represented by a member of the government or by some other specially designated representative.*

3. *The Security Council may hold meetings at such places other than the seat of the Organization as in its judgment will best facilitate its work.*

#### Rule 1

*Meetings of the Security Council shall, with the exception of the periodic meetings referred to in rule 4, be held at the call of the President at any time he deems necessary, but the interval between meetings shall not exceed fourteen days.*

#### Rule 2

*The President shall call a meeting of the Security Council at the request of any member of the Security Council.*

#### Rule 3

*The President shall call a meeting of the Security Council if a dispute or situation is brought to the attention of the Security Council under Article 35 or under Article 11 (3) of the Charter, or if the General Assembly makes recommendations or refers any question to the Security Council under Article 11 (2), or if the Secretary-General brings to the attention of the Security Council any matter under Article 99.*

*Rule 4*

*Periodic meetings of the Security Council called for in Article 28 (2) of the Charter shall be held twice a year, at such times as the Security Council may decide.*

*Rule 5*

*Meetings of the Security Council shall normally be held at the seat of the United Nations.*

*Any member of the Security Council or the Secretary-General may propose that the Security Council should meet at another place. Should the Security Council accept any such proposal, it shall decide upon the place and the period during which the Council shall meet at such place.*

*Rule 48*

*Unless it decides otherwise, the Security Council shall meet in public. Any recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the appointment of the Secretary-General shall be discussed and decided at a private meeting.*

*Rule 49*

*Subject to the provisions of rule 51, the verbatim record of each meeting of the Security Council shall be made available to the representatives on the Security Council and to the representatives of any other States which have participated in the meeting not later than 10 a.m. of the first working day following the meeting.*

*Rule 50*

*The representatives of the States which have participated in the meeting shall, within two working days after the time indicated in rule 49, inform the Secretary-General of any corrections they wish to have made in the verbatim record.*

*Rule 51*

*The Security Council may decide that for a private meeting the record shall be made in a single copy alone. This record shall be kept by the Secretary-General. The representatives of the States which have participated in the meeting shall, within a period of ten days, inform the Secretary-General of any corrections they wish to have made in this record.*

*Rule 52*

*Corrections that have been requested shall be considered approved unless the President is of the*

*opinion that they are sufficiently important to be submitted to the representatives on the Security Council. In the latter case, the representatives on the Security Council shall submit within two working days any comments they may wish to make. In the absence of objections in this period of time, the record shall be corrected as requested.*

*Rule 53*

*The verbatim record referred to in rule 49 or the record referred to in rule 51, in which no corrections have been requested in the period of time required by rules 50 and 51, respectively, or which has been corrected in accordance with the provisions of rule 52, shall be considered as approved. It shall be signed by the President and shall become the official record of the Security Council.*

*Rule 54*

*The official record of public meetings of the Security Council, as well as the documents annexed thereto, shall be published in the official languages as soon as possible.*

*Rule 55*

*At the close of each private meeting the Security Council shall issue a communiqué through the Secretary-General.*

*Rule 56*

*The representatives of the Members of the United Nations which have taken part in a private meeting shall at all times have the right to consult the record of that meeting in the office of the Secretary-General. The Security Council may at any time grant access to this record to authorized representatives of other Members of the United Nations.*

*Rule 57*

*The Secretary-General shall, once each year, submit to the Security Council a list of the records and documents which up to that time have been considered confidential. The Security Council shall decide which of these shall be made available to other Members of the United Nations, which shall be made public, and which shall continue to remain confidential.*

*This section comprises five subsections, namely: A. Meetings, concerning the convening of meetings pursuant to rules 1 to 5 as well as rule 48; B. Informal consultations of the whole; C. Other informal meetings of the members of the Security Council;*

D. Discussions concerning meetings; and E. Records, maintained pursuant to rules 49 to 57.

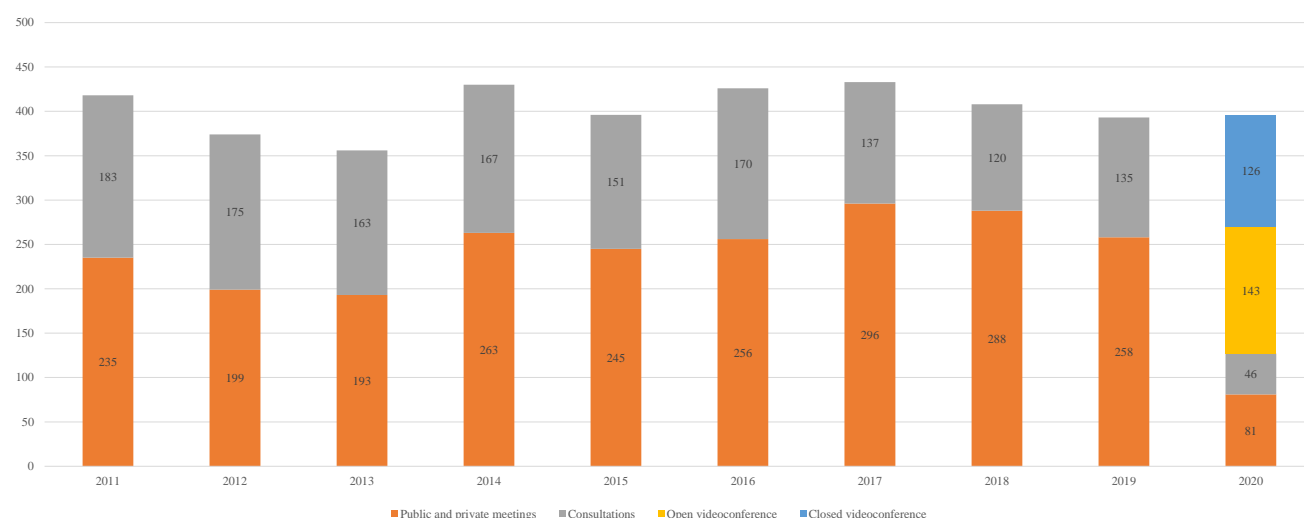
During the period under review, the Council held 81 meetings, of which 79 were public meetings and two were private meetings. In addition, in 2020 the Council held a total of 46 informal consultations of the whole (also known as consultations or informal consultations). In accordance with the working methods of the Council developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, Council members also held 269 videoconferences, of which 143 were open videoconferences and 126 were closed videoconferences. Council members also continued to hold informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings. Six informal interactive dialogues and 22 Arria-formula meetings were held during the year (three informal interactive dialogues and 18 Arria-

formula meetings were held by means of a videoconference).

Figure I shows the total number of meetings and informal consultations of the whole held from 2011 to 2020, along with the number of open and closed videoconferences held in 2020. The figure reflects the deep impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the functioning and working methods of the Security Council.

During the period under review, the question of the format of meetings was raised during an open videoconference in connection with the working methods of the Council (see case 1).

Figure I  
Number of meetings, consultations and videoconferences, 2011–2020



## A. Meetings

### Application of rules relating to meetings

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the adoption of new working methods that included the use of videoconferences, the Council did not hold any meetings from 12 March to 14 July 2020, exceeding the 14-day interval between meetings as provided for under rule 1 of the provisional rules of procedure.<sup>55</sup> The Council continued, on occasion, to convene more

than one meeting a day and it did so also with respect to videoconferences.

In 2020, the Council held no periodic meetings pursuant to rule 4 or any meetings away from Headquarters in accordance with rule 5.

During the reporting period, no communications were received from Member States requesting the Council to convene a meeting that explicitly cited rule 2 or 3 as the basis of the request. Table 5 below lists two communications requesting an urgent or special meeting, one without explicit reference to rules 2 or 3 and one explicitly invoking Article 35 of the Charter.

<sup>55</sup> The Council held its 8745th meeting on 12 March 2020 (S/PV.8745) and its 8746th meeting on 14 July 2020 (S/PV.8746).

Table 5

**Letters in which Member States requested an urgent or special meeting, 2020**

<i>Letter addressed to the President of the Council</i>	<i>Summary</i>	<i>Meeting or videoconference convened (date and agenda item)</i>
Letter dated 13 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela addressed to the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2020/399</a> )	Requesting the Council to urgently hold necessary discussions to recognize that the aggression perpetrated by the Governments of Colombia and the United States against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela between 3 and 4 May 2020 was an armed attack and to issue a clear statement condemning and prohibiting the use or threat of the use of force against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	<a href="#">S/2020/435</a> The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela 20 May 2020
Letter dated 19 June 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Egypt addressed to the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2020/566</a> )	Pursuant to Article 35 of the Charter, requesting that the Council urgently consider the developments related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam at the earliest possible opportunity under the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa”	<a href="#">S/2020/636</a> Peace and security in Africa 29 June 2020

*Complaints raised by Member States concerning the application of rule 3*

On 6 February, at the request of the United Kingdom, France and the United States, the Council held a meeting<sup>56</sup> under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” to discuss the situation in the north-west of the Syrian Arab Republic. In his remarks, citing the violation of multiple truces by “militants upon the instructions of their handlers”, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic questioned why “no one in the Security Council called for an emergency meeting to discuss the bombardment of Aleppo by terrorists”.

In a letter dated 3 April 2020 addressed to the President of the Security Council, citing the “dangerous actions” by the United States, which threatened the peace and security of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the entire region, the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela stated that despite the previous communications of his delegation requesting the Council to use its power under Article 34 of the Charter to “open an investigation” into the situation, there had not been an effective response from the Council and the situation had deteriorated in terms of security and respect for international law.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> See [S/PV.8715](#).

<sup>57</sup> [S/2020/277](#). See also [S/2020/130](#). For more information on Article 34 of the Charter, see part VI, sect. II.

**Format***Public meetings*

The Council continued to convene meetings in public as provided for in rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure, mainly for the purposes of: (a) receiving briefings on country-specific or regional situations or thematic issues under its consideration; (b) holding debates on particular items;<sup>58</sup> and (c) adopting decisions.<sup>59</sup> In 2020, given the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of meetings held by the Council decreased significantly.

In 2020, the Council held a total of 81 meetings, of which 79 (97.5 per cent) were held in public. By comparison, in 2019 the Council held a total of 258 meetings, of which 243 were held in public, and in 2018 it held a total of 288 meetings, of which 275 were held in public. In 2020, Council members also held 269 videoconferences, of which 143 (53.2 per cent) were open and 126 (46.8 per cent) were closed.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>58</sup> In 2020, the Council continued the practice of resuming meetings due to financial constraints that restricted meetings to taking place from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. (see [S/PV.8699](#), [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 1\)](#), [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 2\)](#), [S/PV.8706](#), [S/PV.8706 \(Resumption 1\)](#), [S/PV.8723](#) and [S/PV.8723 \(Resumption 1\)](#)).

<sup>59</sup> On the format of public meetings, see also the note by the President dated 30 August 2017 ([S/2017/507](#), annex, sect. II.C.1).

<sup>60</sup> For more information on the features of open and closed videoconferences of the Council, see sect. I.B above. For a list of all the videoconferences held by the Council in 2020, see the annex to the present part.

During the period under review, Council members held 4 meetings and 15 videoconferences at which two or more Council members were represented at the ministerial or higher levels, 16 of which were held in connection with thematic items and 3 of which were held in connection with regional and country-specific items. In 2020, the Council held four videoconferences at which more than half of the Council members were represented at the ministerial or higher levels. Those videoconferences were held in connection with the items entitled “The situation in Mali”, “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace”, “Maintenance of international peace and security” and “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”. In addition, the Council held two meetings and four videoconferences at which one or more Council members were represented at the level of Head of State or Government. Three of the four videoconferences were presided over by Heads of State. On 24 September, at the initiative of the Niger, which held the presidency for the month,<sup>61</sup> Council members held an open videoconference<sup>62</sup> in connection with the item entitled

“Maintenance of international peace and security”, which focused on global governance after the COVID-19 pandemic. Four Council members were represented at the level of Head of State or Government, including the Niger, which was represented by its President, and nine Council members were represented at the ministerial level, which was the highest number of Council members represented at a high level at a Council meeting or videoconference in 2020. On 3 November, the Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines presided over an open videoconference<sup>63</sup> in connection with the item entitled “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace”, focusing on the contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity. On 4 December, the President of South Africa presided over an open videoconference<sup>64</sup> in connection with the item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations”, focusing on cooperation with the African Union.

Table 6 lists all the high-level meetings and videoconferences held in 2020 at which two or more Council members were represented at the ministerial or higher levels.

<sup>61</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 1 September 2020 (S/2020/883).

<sup>62</sup> See S/2020/953.

<sup>63</sup> See S/2020/1090.

<sup>64</sup> See S/2020/1179.

Table 6  
High-level meetings and videoconferences, 2020

Meeting record and date	Item	High-level participation
S/PV.8699 9 January 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<b>Heads of State or Government (1)</b> <b>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b> (Prime Minister) <b>Ministerial level (3)</b> <b>Estonia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs)
S/PV.8721 12 February 2020	Children and armed conflict	<b>Heads of State or Government (1)</b> <b>Belgium</b> (King) <sup>a</sup> <b>Ministerial level (2)</b> <b>Estonia</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Indonesia</b> (Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs)
S/PV.8723 13 February 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	<b>Ministerial level (3)</b> <b>Belgium</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence), <b>Estonia</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Niger</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad)

## Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2020

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>High-level participation</i>
<a href="#">S/PV.8734</a> 27 February 2020	The situation in the Middle East	<b>Ministerial level (2)</b>  <b>Belgium</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Development), <b>Germany</b> (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs)
<a href="#">S/2020/465</a> 27 May 2020	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	<b>Heads of State or Government (1)</b>  <b>Estonia</b> (President)  <b>Ministerial level (5)</b>  <b>Germany</b> (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), <b>Indonesia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Integration), <b>Tunisia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia)
<a href="#">S/2020/541</a> 11 June 2020	The situation in Mali	<b>Ministerial level (8)</b>  <b>Belgium</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence), <b>Dominican Republic</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Estonia</b> (Minister of Defence), <b>France</b> (Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs), <b>Niger</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad), <b>South Africa</b> (Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation), <b>Tunisia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia)
<a href="#">S/2020/663</a> 2 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<b>Ministerial level (6)</b>  <b>Estonia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>France</b> (Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Tunisia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs)
<a href="#">S/2020/686</a> 8 July 2020	The situation in Libya	<b>Ministerial level (6)</b>  <b>China</b> (Special Representative of President Xi Jinping, State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Niger</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad), <b>Tunisia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>South Africa</b> (Minister for International Relations and Coordination), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa)
<a href="#">S/2020/727</a> 17 July 2020	Women and peace and security	<b>Ministerial level (4)</b>  <b>Belgium</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence), <b>Germany</b> (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>South Africa</b> (Minister for International Relations and Cooperation), <b>Niger</b> (Minister for the Advancement of Women and Child Protection)
<a href="#">S/2020/751</a> 24 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<b>Ministerial level (6)</b>  <b>Belgium</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Development Cooperation), <b>Estonia</b> (Minister of the Environment), <b>Germany</b> (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Tunisia</b> (Secretary of State to the Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs)



<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>High-level participation</i>
<a href="#">S/2020/791</a> 6 August 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	<b>Ministerial level (3)</b> <b>Indonesia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Tunisia</b> (Secretary of State to the Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs)
<a href="#">S/2020/799</a> 12 August 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	<b>Ministerial level (5)</b> <b>Indonesia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Estonia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), <b>South Africa</b> (Minister for International Relations and Cooperation), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs)
<a href="#">S/2020/929</a> 17 September 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<b>Ministerial level (3)</b> <b>Niger</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad), <b>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Integration), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia)
<a href="#">S/2020/953</a> 24 September 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<b>Heads of State or Government (4)</b> <b>Estonia</b> (President), <b>Niger</b> (President), <b>South Africa</b> (President), <b>Tunisia</b> (President) <b>Ministerial level (9)</b> <b>Belgium</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence), <b>China</b> (State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>France</b> (Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), <b>Indonesia</b> (Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Russian Federation</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Integration), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs)
<a href="#">S/2020/1037</a> 20 October 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<b>Ministerial level (5)</b> <b>China</b> (State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Niger</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad), <b>Russian Federation</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>South Africa</b> (Minister for International Relations and Cooperation), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs)
<a href="#">S/2020/1084</a> 29 October 2020	Women and peace and security	<b>Ministerial level (2)</b> <b>Germany</b> (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa)
<a href="#">S/2020/1090</a> 3 November 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	<b>Head of State or Government (1)</b> <b>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b> (Prime Minister) <b>Ministerial level (8)</b> <b>Belgium</b> (Minister of Development Cooperation), <b>Estonia</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), <b>Russian Federation</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>South Africa</b> (Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation), <b>Tunisia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs)

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>High-level participation</i>
<a href="#">S/2020/1176</a> 3 December 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	<p><b>Ministerial level (7)</b></p> <p><b>Belgium</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade), <b>Estonia</b> (Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office), <b>Indonesia</b> (Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b> (Minister of State with responsibility for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade), <b>South Africa</b> (Minister of International Relations and Cooperation), <b>Tunisia</b> (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs)</p>
<a href="#">S/2020/1179</a> 4 December 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations	<p><b>Heads of State or Government (4)</b></p> <p><b>Niger</b> (President), <b>South Africa</b> (President), <b>Tunisia</b> (President), <b>Saint Vincent and the Grenadines</b> (Prime Minister)</p> <p><b>Ministerial level (7)</b></p> <p><b>Belgium</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Affairs and Foreign Trade), <b>China</b> (State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Estonia</b> (Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Germany</b> (Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs), <b>Indonesia</b> (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Multilateral Affairs), <b>United Kingdom</b> (Minister for Africa), <b>Viet Nam</b> (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs)</p>

<sup>a</sup> The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence of Belgium presided over the meeting.

#### *Private meetings*

During the period under review, the Council continued to hold meetings in private, in accordance with rule 48 of the provisional rules of procedure. Private meetings continued to constitute a small percentage of all Council meetings, with only 2 meetings, or 2.5 per cent, of a total of 81 Council meetings held in 2020 (see figure II).<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, as

indicated in table 7, both were meetings held with countries contributing troops and police under the item entitled “Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#), annex II, sections A and B”. In 2020, Council members also held eight closed videoconferences with countries contributing troops and police and one closed videoconference to hear the annual briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice.

<sup>65</sup> On the format of private meetings, see also the note by the President dated 30 August 2017 ([S/2017/507](#), annex, sect. II.C.2).



Figure II  
Public and private meetings, 2020

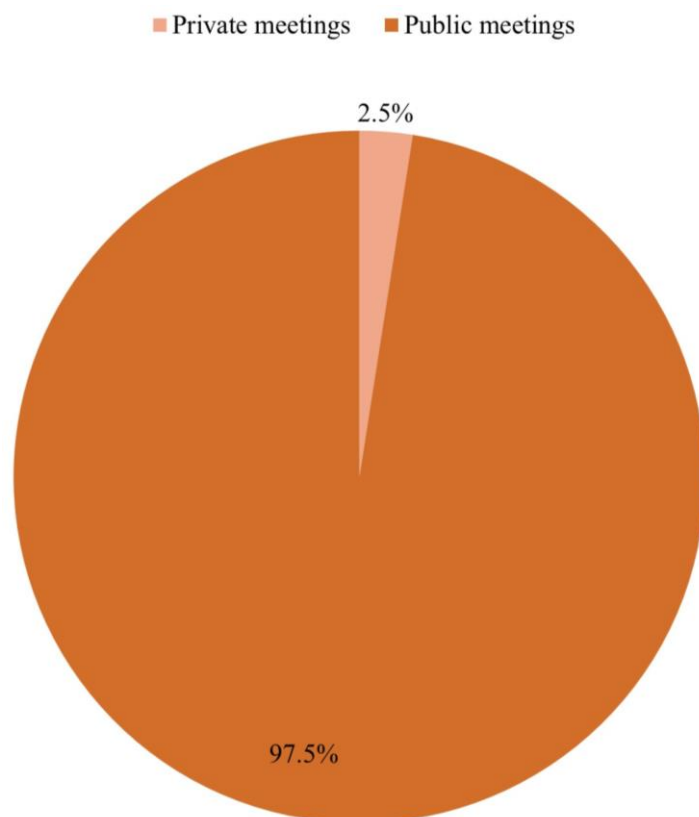


Table 7  
Private meetings, 2020

Item	Meeting record and date
Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B (two meetings)	<a href="#">S/PV.8705</a> , 16 January 2020 <a href="#">S/PV.8740</a> , 3 March 2020

## B. Informal consultations of the whole

Informal consultations of the whole are not official meetings of the Council. The members gather in private for the purpose of holding discussions and receiving briefings from the Secretariat and representatives of the Secretary-General. The meetings are normally held in the Consultations Room, adjacent to the Security Council Chamber. During the period under review, in accordance with the health and safety guidelines agreed upon by Council members as part of the working methods of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person informal consultations were also held in the Economic and Social Council Chamber and the Security Council Chamber.

In 2020, Council members held 46 informal consultations of the whole compared with 135 in 2019 and 120 in 2018 (see figure I above). During the period under review, Council members also held virtual informal consultations by means of closed videoconferences.<sup>66</sup> Frequently, informal consultations or closed videoconferences were held, respectively, immediately after public meetings or open videoconferences.

Pursuant to the Council's established practice, no official records of informal consultations were issued and non-members were not invited. In accordance with the

<sup>66</sup> For more information on the working methods adopted by the members of the Council because of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020, see sect. I above.

working methods agreed upon during the COVID-19 pandemic, virtual discussions announced as closed videoconferences did not include the participation of non-Council members and no written statements were published.<sup>67</sup> Frequently, however, statements to the press were issued or elements to the press were read out by the President of the Council following informal consultations or closed videoconferences.<sup>68</sup>

### C. Other informal meetings of the members of the Security Council

During the period under review, Council members continued to hold informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings.<sup>69</sup> Informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings are convened at the initiative of one or more members of the Council. In practice, informal interactive dialogues are convened with the participation of all Council members, while Arria-formula meetings are convened with the participation of all or some Council members. While informal interactive dialogues are presided over by the President of the Council, Arria-formula meetings are not. Frequently, the member or members of the Council convening the Arria-formula meeting also chair the meeting. Neither of the two types of meeting are considered formal meetings of the Council. Neither of the two types of meeting are announced in the *Journal of the United Nations* or in the Council's programme of work and no official records are prepared. Invitees to informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings include Member States, relevant organizations and individuals. In past practice, Arria-formula meetings were closed to the public, while more recently they have been open to the public or even broadcast. Informal

interactive dialogues are not open to the public or broadcast. As described below, the COVID-19 pandemic had a deep impact on the holding of these two types of meeting.

#### *Informal interactive dialogues*

According to the note by the President dated 30 August 2017, "when it deems appropriate", the Council may utilize informal dialogues to seek the views of Member States that are parties to a conflict and/or other interested and affected parties.<sup>70</sup> During the reporting period, the Council held six informal interactive dialogues, three of which were held by videoconference.<sup>71</sup> All informal interactive dialogues held in 2020 concerned country-specific or regional situations, as shown in table 8.

In 2020, the features and nature of informal interactive dialogues were addressed in one communication to the Council. In a letter dated 12 May 2020 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Council,<sup>72</sup> the representative of the Russian Federation expressed regret that the interaction of Council members with the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which was scheduled for the same day, would be held behind closed doors in the "informal-informal" interactive dialogue format, which effectively precluded States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and the OPCW policymaking organs from having any knowledge concerning the contents of the meeting. In the letter, the representative further said that his delegation would not be participating in the meeting and objected to "the practice of interaction with the OPCW Director-General behind the back of the vast majority of the OPCW membership" and shared the list of questions that his delegation had intended to ask in an open setting.

<sup>67</sup> See [S/2020/253](#).

<sup>68</sup> Not all statements to the press were issued as a result of informal consultations or closed videoconferences. For more information on elements to the press, see sect. V below.

<sup>69</sup> For more information on informal interactive dialogues and Arria-formula meetings, see [S/2017/507](#), annex, paras. 92, 95 and 97–99.

<sup>70</sup> [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 92.

<sup>71</sup> For information on the evolution of informal interactive dialogues, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2008–2009* to 2019.

<sup>72</sup> See [S/2020/390](#).

Table 8  
Informal interactive dialogues, 2020

Date	Subject	Participants (including non-members of the Council)
14 January 2020	Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region	All Council members, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Date	Subject	Participants (including non-members of the Council)
23 January 2020	United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) (100-day deadline)	All Council members, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS, Special Envoy for South Sudan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development
26 February 2020	Situation in Burundi	All Council members; Assistant Secretary-General for Africa
12 May 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic (report of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW))	14 Council members, <sup>b</sup> Director-General of OPCW, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Coordinator of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team
2 June 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Resolution 2292 (2016) implementation (European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI)	All Council members, Deputy Secretary General for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response of the European External Action Service
22 July 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Implications of COVID-19 on peacebuilding and sustaining peace in conflict-affected countries	All Council members, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support

<sup>a</sup> Held by videoconference.

<sup>b</sup> See S/2020/390.

#### *Arria-formula meetings*

As provided for in the note by the President dated 30 August 2017, Arria-formula meetings are utilized by members of the Council as “a flexible and informal forum” for enhancing their deliberations and their contact with civil society and non-governmental organizations.<sup>73</sup> In accordance with the note, Council members may invite, on an informal basis, any Member State, relevant organization or individual to participate in Arria-formula meetings. During the period under review, Council members held 22 Arria-formula meetings, 18 of which were held virtually (81.8 per cent), of which 17 were open and 1 was closed. Of the 17 open Arria-formula meetings held virtually, 10 were broadcast on United Nations Web TV, with the remainder utilizing other platforms. Of the four Arria-formula meetings held in person, three were open and one was closed.

In 2020, a number of Arria-formula meetings featured participants at the ministerial or higher level.<sup>74</sup> On 8 May, Estonia organized a virtual Arria-formula meeting on the subject “Seventy-five years from the end of the Second World War on European soil: lessons learned for preventing future atrocities, responsibility of the Security Council” with the participation of all Council members and 61 Member States. A total of 45 participants were represented at the ministerial

level.<sup>75</sup> On 4 September, Estonia, the United Kingdom and the United States, with additional co-sponsors Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Ukraine, organized a virtual Arria-formula meeting on the topic of “Human rights in Belarus” with the participation of nine Council members and 32 Member States, in which nine Member States were represented at the ministerial level.<sup>76</sup> In some instances, as indicated in table 9, Council members and non-Council members transmitted concept notes and summaries or compilations of statements made by participants during Arria-formula meetings.

In 2020, the nature of Arria-formula meetings and the question of how they should be convened was addressed in three communications from the Russian Federation to the President of the Council. In a letter dated 22 May, the representative of the Russian Federation stated that Estonia, the United Kingdom and the United States had ignored the Arria-formula meeting organized by the Russian Federation on 21 May 2020 on the situation in Crimea and the latter two countries had informed the Secretariat that they objected to the use of United Nations webcasting or archiving of the meeting. The representative noted that even though Arria-formula meetings were not official or informal meetings of the Council, the Russian Federation proceeded from a “tacit understanding” that

<sup>73</sup> See S/2017/507, annex, para. 98.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, S/2020/458, S/2020/900 and S/2020/1169.

<sup>75</sup> See S/2020/458.

<sup>76</sup> See S/2020/900.

all Council members participated in such events, regardless of whether they approved or disapproved of its topic or spirit. In that sense, the Russian Federation distinguished Arria-formula meetings from informal interactive dialogues, where participation was understood to be voluntary. He noted the decision of his delegation to abstain from participating in the Arria-formula meeting on cybersecurity organized by Estonia on 22 May 2020 and attached his statement which was to be delivered at the meeting as an annex to the letter. The representative further said that the Russian Federation reserved the right to object to the webcasting and archiving of any future Arria-formula meeting, until Council members returned to the mutually accepted solutions.<sup>77</sup>

In a letter dated 4 June 2020, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed the view that the summary of the Arria-formula meeting on “Seventy-five years from the end of the Second World War on European soil: lessons learned for preventing future atrocities, responsibility of the Security Council”, held on 8 May, which was prepared by Estonia and circulated as a document of the Council was

“unbalanced” and did not reflect the substance of the statements made by numerous States. He added that his delegation rejected the recommendations and the conclusions set out in the aforementioned summary, which he noted were not agreed with the members of the Council and belonged solely to the Estonian delegation.<sup>78</sup>

In a letter dated 11 December 2020, drawing attention to certain aspects of holding Arria-formula meetings, the representative of the Russian Federation stated that there had been a long-standing tradition among members of the Council to participate in Arria-formula meetings organized by their colleagues out of respect, whether they approved or disapproved of the topic. He added that some members of the Council were attempting to impede the holding of Arria-formula meeting that they did not like by choosing not to participate and trying to limit their audience by objecting to their webcast through the United Nations Web TV platform.<sup>79</sup>

Arria-formula meetings held during the period under review are listed in table 9.

<sup>77</sup> See [S/2020/438](#).

<sup>78</sup> See [S/2020/502](#).

<sup>79</sup> See [S/2020/1200](#).

Table 9  
Arria-formula meetings, 2020

Date	Subject	Organizer(s)	Concept note	Summary
20 January 2020	Implementation of resolution <a href="#">2118 (2013)</a> : Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) fact-finding mission report on Douma	Russian Federation	—	<a href="#">S/2020/96</a>
19 February 2020	Briefing by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic	Estonia, Germany, United Kingdom	—	—
21 February 2020	Reprisals against women human rights defenders and women peacebuilders who engage with the Council and its subsidiary bodies	Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, United Kingdom	—	—
6 March 2020	Human rights situation in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine	Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States	—	—
22 April 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Climate and security risks: the latest data. What can the United Nations do to prevent climate-related conflicts and how can we climate-proof United Nations in-country activities?	Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Viet Nam	—	<a href="#">S/2020/392</a>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Organizer(s)</i>	<i>Concept note</i>	<i>Summary</i>
8 May 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Seventy-five years from the end of the Second World War on European soil: lessons learned for preventing future atrocities, responsibility of the Security Council	Estonia	<a href="#">S/2020/352</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/458</a>
21 May 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Follow-up on the Arria-formula discussion of 6 March 2020 on the situation in Crimea	Russian Federation	—	<a href="#">S/2020/530</a>
22 May 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Cyberstability, conflict prevention and capacity-building	Estonia, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Kenya	<a href="#">S/2020/389</a>	<a href="#">S/2020/643</a>
15 July 2020 <sup>a</sup>	The illegal exploitation of natural resources in the Great Lakes region: how to translate the ongoing positive regional momentum into new options for conflict prevention, management and reform	Belgium, South Africa, United States	—	—
27 July 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Women and the Afghan peace process: ensuring women's participation and promoting their rights	Afghanistan, Germany, Indonesia, United Kingdom	—	<a href="#">S/2020/783</a>
26 August 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Cyberattacks against critical infrastructure	Belgium, Estonia, Indonesia, Viet Nam, International Committee of the Red Cross	—	—
4 September 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Human rights in Belarus	Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States	—	<a href="#">S/2020/900</a>
9 September 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Implementation of resolutions on youth and peace and security by United Nations peace operations	Dominican Republic, France, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United States	—	—
28 September 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Implementation of resolution <a href="#">2118 (2013)</a> : upholding the authority of OPCW	China, Russian Federation	—	<a href="#">S/2020/1197</a>
2 October 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Access to education in conflict and post conflict contexts: role of digital technology and connectivity	Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa	—	—
9 October 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Mandating peace: enhancing the mediation sensitivity and effectiveness of the Security Council	Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Viet Nam	<a href="#">S/2020/983</a>	—
20 November 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Peace process in Afghanistan: what can the Security Council do to support the peace process in Afghanistan?	Afghanistan, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Indonesia, Norway, Qatar	—	<a href="#">S/2020/1169</a>
24 November 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Commemoration of the 25-year anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Russian Federation	—	—

Date	Subject	Organizer(s)	Concept note	Summary
25 and 26 November 2020 <sup>a</sup>	End unilateral coercive measures now	China, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa	–	<a href="#">S/2020/1172</a>
2 December 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Implementation of the 2015 Minsk Package of Measures on the settlement in Ukraine: a year since Paris “Normandie” Summit	Russian Federation	–	–
3 December 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on the human rights situation in Yemen	Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany	–	–
9 December 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Youth and peace and security: capitalizing on intergenerational dialogue to build and sustain peace and enhance social cohesion at community levels	Dominican Republic, France, Ireland, Kenya, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia	–	–

<sup>a</sup> Held by videoconference.

#### Other informal meetings

Following the practice started in 2007, the Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union held their fifth joint informal seminar and fourteenth annual joint consultative meeting, which were conducted by videoconference on 29 and 30 September 2020.<sup>80</sup>

### D. Discussions concerning meetings

During the period under review, questions pertaining to the meetings of the Council and videoconferences were raised in a letter dated 30 March 2020 addressed to the President of the Council from the representative of Switzerland, writing on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group. While welcoming the active discussions within the Council and proactive efforts, including by the Council’s presidency, to adapt the working methods to the extraordinary circumstances, the representative of Switzerland expressed concern that the videoconferences conducted at the end of March 2020 had not been included in the Council’s programme of work, officially announced or webcast. In that regard, the Group called for, among other measures, the inclusion of all virtual meetings in the Council’s programme of work and the improvement of

the videoconferencing network system to allow for videoconferencing sessions to be broadcast by United Nations webcast, adding that all virtual meetings of the Council taking place in lieu of discussions in the open chamber should be accessible online to the public.<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, Council members and the wider membership discussed issues pertaining to the meetings of the Council and other forms of informal gatherings of members of the Council, in the context of an open videoconference, during the annual open debate on the working methods of the Council held on 15 May (see case 1).

#### Case 1

##### Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

On 15 May, at the joint initiative of Estonia, which held the presidency of the Council for the month, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, whose representative held the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions,<sup>82</sup> Council members convened an open videoconference<sup>83</sup> on the working methods of the Council in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)”, focusing on the issue of ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Council. Council members were briefed by the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in her capacity as the Chair of the

<sup>80</sup> See [A/75/2](#). Previously, the two Councils had met on 21 October 2019 in Addis Ababa (see [S/2019/825](#) and [S/2020/192](#)). For information on prior practice concerning the informal joint meetings of the Security Council and the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2008–2009 to Supplement 2019*.

<sup>81</sup> See [S/2020/252](#).

<sup>82</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 7 May 2020 ([S/2020/374](#)).

<sup>83</sup> See [S/2020/418](#).



Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, the Executive Director of Security Council Report, and Edward Luck, the Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of Professional Practice in International and Public Affairs of Columbia University. At the videoconference, six Council members delivered statements.<sup>84</sup> In addition, written statements were submitted by 41 Member States.<sup>85</sup>

Members and non-members of the Council exchanged views about the nature and format of meetings and other Council activities and their impact on efficiency, effectiveness, inclusivity and interactivity in the work of the Council. They also discussed the virtual working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic and how to ensure the continued functioning of the Council in future extraordinary circumstances.

Regarding the format of meetings, a number of delegations<sup>86</sup> expressed the view that the Council should hold more public meetings. Some participants<sup>87</sup> urged the Council to keep closed meetings and informal consultations of the whole to a minimum, as meaningful participation of Member States with a legitimate stake in the Council's deliberations ensured transparency throughout the decision-making process. Some<sup>88</sup> stressed that private meetings and informal consultations should be seen as exceptions and suggested that the Council should prioritize holding public meetings.

In contrast, the representative of France underscored that private discussions were needed for the Council to be efficient and effective in reaching consensus on difficult issues and that finding a better balance between public discussions and closed consultations would ensure the effectiveness of the Council in its deliberations. He called for greater use of private informal formats such as informal interactive dialogues, Arria-formula meetings and private formal meetings to engage directly and constructively with the

countries and parties concerned. The representative of the United Kingdom noted that a significant challenge lay in maintaining an appropriate balance between open and closed meetings and that achieving the right balance required Council members to approach the monthly programme of work with an open mind and avoid the trap of following the same format each time an issue appeared on the agenda. He added that the assumption that closed meetings were more effective did not always hold true. Instead he noted that to be effective, Council members had to enter those meetings with a willingness to engage in a discussion and consider action. Similarly, speaking on behalf of 24 former elected members of the Council, the representative of New Zealand stated that Council members should reflect on the ever-increasing workload and proliferation of meetings and that the Council should be prepared to innovate and adapt to ensure that it was making the best use of its time. The representative of Nigeria said that the working methods of the Council should be tailored to ensure that conflicts on its agenda, as well as emerging threats, were addressed within their time frames and at meetings designed, in terms of format and focus, to bring about the best chance of a meaningful outcome from the Council's deliberations.

Many speakers<sup>89</sup> specifically acknowledged the importance of open debates for enhancing inclusivity and legitimacy of the Council's work. Speaking on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, the representative of Switzerland encouraged the separation of open debates from the work on and adoption of a related outcome, as this would allow the wider membership to inform Council deliberations rather than merely to accompany the adoption of pre-defined Council outcomes. He further noted the need for more open debates on country situations. The delegation of Guatemala welcomed the overall increasing trend of public Council meetings through the holding of open debates, which promoted the wider participation of non-Council members. Expressing encouragement for the full and active participation of all interested Member States in the context of the extraordinary circumstances imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, several delegations<sup>90</sup> highlighted the need for open debates to be accessible in all official languages. The representative of Morocco stressed the importance of regularly holding open debates on the working methods of the Council, as continued discussion of that issue was of interest to all Member States.

<sup>84</sup> Viet Nam spoke on behalf of the 10 elected members of the Council.

<sup>85</sup> Afghanistan, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Slovakia, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Ukraine.

<sup>86</sup> Australia, Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, Italy, Philippines, Malta and Nigeria.

<sup>87</sup> Brazil, Cuba and Turkey.

<sup>88</sup> Brazil and Cuba.

<sup>89</sup> Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Australia, Bahrain, El Salvador, Guatemala, Japan and Morocco.

<sup>90</sup> Canada and El Salvador.

Some delegations touched upon the need for transparency and effectiveness of informal consultations of the whole. The representative of Cuba called for the issuance of minutes of informal consultations. While noting the need to improve informal consultations, the representative of Nigeria stated that meeting behind closed doors provided the opportunity for Council members to engage informally with the aim of achieving concrete results. The delegation of Cyprus suggested that when the Council discussed a situation in closed consultations, it should first invite the affected State to offer its perspective before having its own deliberations. The representative of Malaysia called on the Council to produce summaries of closed consultations which could be shared with the broader membership. Speaking on behalf of 24 former elected members of the Council, the representative of New Zealand suggested that Member States should utilize situational awareness briefings and make requests under “any other business” to ensure that emerging threats were addressed in a timely manner. The representative of Malaysia suggested that the Council should request more early warning and situational awareness briefings from the Secretariat. The delegation of Australia echoed that point and proposed that horizon-scanning and situational awareness briefings should include input from the Peacebuilding Commission. The representative of the United Kingdom expressed support for informal horizon-scanning briefings and the development of “sofa talks” to address the challenge of the Council spending too much time in lengthy meetings that addressed the “conflicts of yesterday” rather than shouldering its responsibility to prevent future conflict. He added that informal discussions were no substitute for Council meetings, not least for reasons of transparency.

Several delegations<sup>91</sup> expressed appreciation or called for the greater use of Arria-formula meetings. The representative of El Salvador stated that Arria-formula meetings provided a space for dialogue with actors directly involved in various situations that threatened international peace, security and stability. However, they could not replace formal Council meetings. The delegation of Guatemala stated that the holding of numerous Arria-formula meetings had enabled the Council to obtain more truthful information and thus be more effective in upholding its responsibility to maintain international peace and security. The delegation of Canada, suggesting that the Council could do more to institutionalize linkages with

the Peacebuilding Commission, welcomed the practice of informal interactive dialogues between the Commission and the Council on countries and regions where both organs had important roles to play.

Members and non-members of the Council welcomed the adoption by Council members of the new working methods during the COVID-19 pandemic, thereby ensuring the continued functioning of the Council. Speaking on behalf of the elected members of the Council, the representative of Viet Nam stated that the pandemic had underlined the need for the Council to be more responsive, effective and agile to ensure its continuous functioning as mandated by the Charter. He added that during the crisis greater efforts had to be made to guarantee the Council’s ability to conduct its work continuously in accordance with normal procedures and practices. Recalling Article 28 of the Charter, which required the Council to function continuously, the representative of the United Kingdom expressed regret that the working methods had not been able to respond to the crisis in a more agile and effective way. Owing to a lack of consensus in the Council, neither the Council nor its subsidiary bodies had held formal meetings since 12 March, which led to not having verbatim transcripts of meetings. He further expressed regret that the technical platform had not been able to accommodate simultaneous interpretation or open debates and continued to suffer from technical glitches. He also noted that meetings were conducted without the benefit of the established framework of the provisional rules of procedure and the mechanisms for resolution of disagreements that they provided. By contrast, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed the view that the Council was functioning rather well under the circumstances and called for keeping the agreed *modus operandi*. The representative of Lebanon asserted that, even though the Council had been able to adapt its work through improved technology platforms, namely videoconferences, the online meetings could not permanently replace in-person meetings and should only be applied during extraordinary and unprecedented circumstances.

Several delegations<sup>92</sup> maintained that open and closed videoconferences should be considered formal meetings of the Council. The delegation of Ukraine noted that it was particularly important to hold open videoconferences whenever possible in the current circumstances and that closed videoconferences should be the exception rather than the rule. The representative of Switzerland argued that Council

<sup>91</sup> France, Australia, Guatemala, Malaysia, Nigeria and Singapore.

<sup>92</sup> Australia, Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Poland and Switzerland (on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group).



videoconferences should be included in the formal programme of work. The delegations of Austria, New Zealand and Switzerland called for the inclusion of videoconferences in the *Journal of the United Nations*. The delegation of Brazil stated that due attention should be given to the announcement and webcasting of virtual meetings, so as to ensure that all Member States knew what was being discussed in the Council. Many speakers welcomed the organization by Estonia of the Arria-formula meeting on “Seventy-five years from the end of the Second World War on European soil”, which was held by videoconference on 8 May. They described the videoconference as an example of the successful use of new and innovative digital solutions to make meetings publicly accessible and to promote transparency and inclusivity in the extraordinary circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>93</sup> The delegation of Ukraine called for a more concerted effort to prepare substantive elements for the press following closed videoconferences.

The delegation of Australia recommended that the Secretariat record open and closed videoconferences. The representatives of Ireland and Liechtenstein called for the introduction of formal records of Council videoconferences. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that it was important for Council members to agree on the status of videoconferences so that verbatim transcripts could be produced. The representative of the Russian Federation maintained that the Council had its records, which were just called a different name under those circumstances for legal reasons and that should not be ignored.

The representative of the United Kingdom stated that going forward the Council needed to consider how to put contingency plans into place to ensure it could respond more quickly and effectively to future crises. The representative of Switzerland, speaking on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, noted the expectation that the Council would in the future be prepared to switch instantly to a virtual mode and to otherwise effectively adapt to any other situation where physical meetings were again not possible. The representative of China expressed support for the Council to improve itself on the basis of observing the Charter and its provisional rules of procedure so as to better address new circumstances and challenges in discharging its mandate. The

representative of Poland called for ensuring the continuous, transparent, effective, efficient and agile functioning of the Council, during both ordinary and exceptional circumstances, in line with the Charter, including Articles 24 (1) and 28 (1), the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, presidential notes on its working methods and other relevant documents and practices. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed the view that contingency plans had already been developed and that further contingency plans were needed for the operation and functioning of the Council in the post “lockdown” environment.

## E. Records

During the period under review, verbatim records were issued following each public meeting of the Council in accordance with rule 49 of the provisional rules of procedure and communiqués were issued following private meetings in accordance with rule 55. No questions were raised at Council meetings regarding the application of rules 49 to 57 in connection with the preparation, access to and issuance of verbatim records, communiqués or other documents.

In 2020, however, as part of the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was agreed that, until the situation changed, verbatim records of videoconferences would not be published.<sup>94</sup> That agreement notwithstanding, in order to ensure the transparency of videoconferences, it was also agreed that the President of the Council would, within 48 hours, circulate as a document of the Council a compilation document containing the interventions of the briefers and those of the members and non-members of the Council participating in the videoconference who requested the inclusion of their statements in the document. That would not apply, however, to videoconferences of the members of the Council that were announced in advance as closed videoconferences.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, the records and other information relating to videoconferences were published on the website of the Council and the webcasts of the statements delivered during open videoconferences continued to be made publicly available and archived as United Nations webcasts.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup> See [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>95</sup> See [S/2020/253](#), [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>96</sup> See [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>93</sup> United Kingdom, Austria, Ecuador, Liechtenstein, United Arab Emirates and Ukraine.

### III. Agenda

#### Note

Section III deals with the practice of the Council concerning the agenda, in relation to rules 6 to 12 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council.

#### Rule 6

*The Secretary-General shall immediately bring to the attention of all representatives on the Security Council all communications from States, organs of the United Nations, or the Secretary-General concerning any matter for the consideration of the Security Council in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.*

#### Rule 7

*The provisional agenda for each meeting of the Security Council shall be drawn up by the Secretary-General and approved by the President of the Security Council.*

*Only items which have been brought to the attention of the representatives on the Security Council in accordance with rule 6, items covered by rule 10, or matters which the Security Council had previously decided to defer, may be included in the provisional agenda.*

#### Rule 8

*The provisional agenda for a meeting shall be communicated by the Secretary-General to the representatives on the Security Council at least three days before the meeting, but in urgent circumstances it may be communicated simultaneously with the notice of the meeting.*

#### Rule 9

*The first item of the provisional agenda for each meeting of the Security Council shall be the adoption of the agenda.*

#### Rule 10

*Any item on the agenda of a meeting of the Security Council, consideration of which has not been completed at that meeting, shall, unless the Security Council otherwise decides, automatically be included in the agenda of the next meeting.*

#### Rule 11

*The Secretary-General shall communicate each week to the representatives on the Security Council a summary statement of matters of which the Security Council is seized and of the stage reached in their consideration.*

#### Rule 12

*The provisional agenda for each periodic meeting shall be circulated to the members of the Security Council at least twenty-one days before the opening of the meeting. Any subsequent change in or addition to the provisional agenda shall be brought to the notice of the members at least five days before the meeting. The Security Council may, however, in urgent circumstances, make additions to the Agenda at any time during a periodic meeting.*

*The provisions of rule 7, paragraph 1, and of rule 9, shall apply also to periodic meetings.*

During the period under review, the Secretary-General continued the practice of distributing communications from States, from organs of the United Nations or from himself concerning any matter for the consideration of the Council, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and pursuant to rule 6 of the provisional rules of procedure. The Secretary-General also continued to draw up a provisional agenda for each meeting of the Council and to communicate the provisional agenda to the representatives on the Council, in accordance with rules 7 and 8. As provided for in the letters from the President of the Council of 2 April and 7 May 2020,<sup>97</sup> presidencies worked “in the spirit of” the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, ensuring, *inter alia*, that the agenda was adopted at the outset of the videoconference, pursuant to rule 9, and that any other relevant rules were observed as a matter of practice, under chapter VI, entitled “Conduct of business”.

The practice relating to the circulation of communications or the preparation of the provisional agenda was not discussed or questioned during the period under review. No periodic meetings were held in 2020 and rule 12 was not applied. The present section is focused on the practice and discussion regarding rules 9 to 11 and is organized under the following three main headings: A. Adoption of the agenda (rule 9); B. Matters of which the Security Council is seized (rules 10 and 11); and C. Discussions concerning the agenda.

<sup>97</sup> See [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

## A. Adoption of the agenda (rule 9)

In accordance with rule 9 of the provisional rules of procedure, the first item of the agenda for each meeting of the Council is the adoption of the agenda.

### *Voting on the adoption of the agenda*

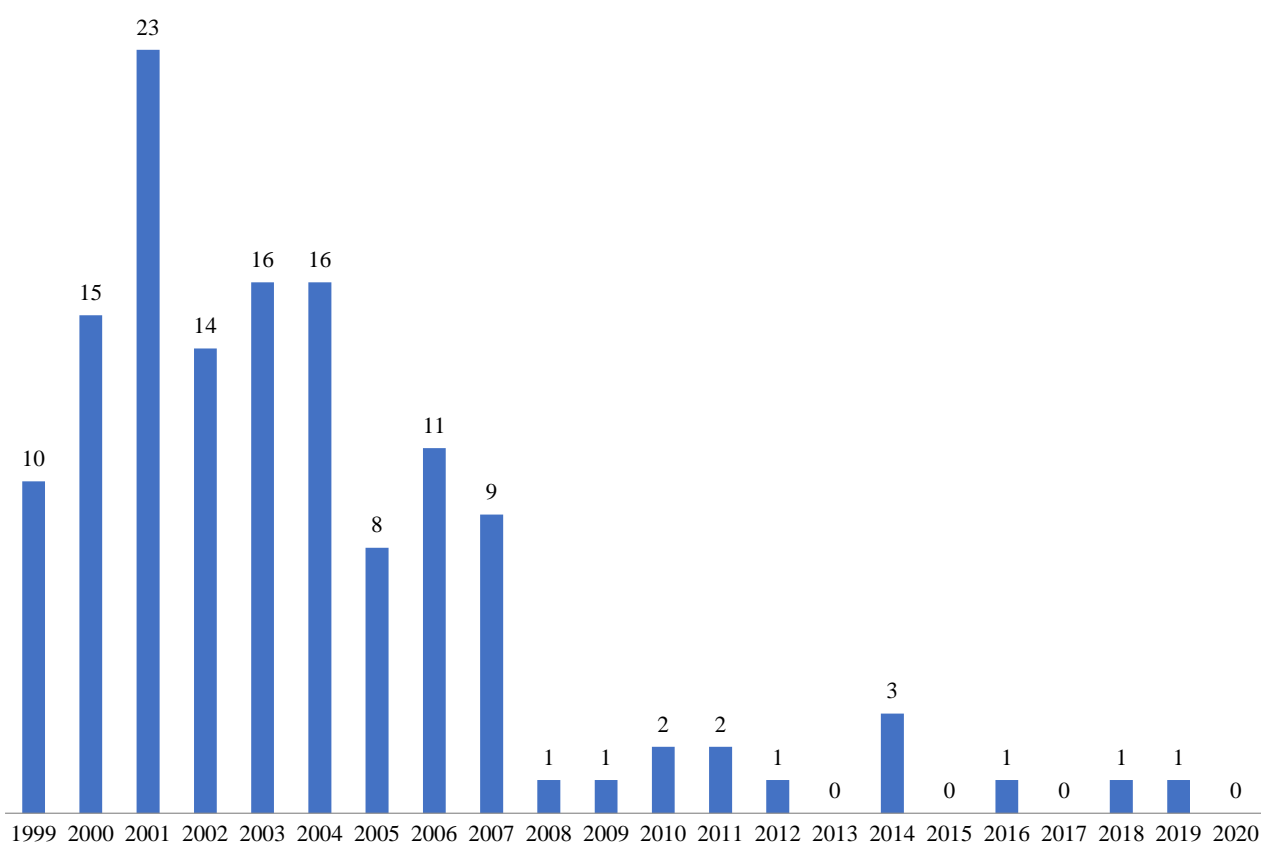
In 2020, no objection was raised to the adoption of the agenda.

### *Newly introduced agenda items*

During the period under review, the Council did not introduce any new items to the list of matters of which it was seized.

From 1999 to 2007, the Council added between 8 and 23 new items to its agenda every year. Since 2008, however, the number of new items introduced each year has decreased significantly, with no more than three new items introduced in any given year. Figure III provides information on the number of newly introduced agenda items per year since 1999.

Figure III  
Number of newly introduced agenda items per year, 1999–2020



### *Consideration of country-specific situations under existing items of a regional nature and region-specific situations under existing thematic items*

During the period under review, the Council continued the practice of using existing items of a regional nature for the consideration of evolving country-specific situations. For example, Council members continued to consider the situations in the Syrian Arab Republic, Lebanon and Yemen under the items entitled “The situation in the Middle East” and

“The situation concerning the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”.<sup>98</sup> In 2020, under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, Council members also considered the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015).<sup>99</sup>

The Council also considered country- and region-specific situations under thematic items on its agenda. For example, Council members addressed the situation in the Persian Gulf region at an open videoconference

<sup>98</sup> For more information, see part I, sects. 20 and 21.

<sup>99</sup> See [S/2020/837](#).

held in connection with the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security”.<sup>100</sup> Under the item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”, the Council deliberated on region-specific situations under the sub-items entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations” and the “Role of the International Organisation of La Francophonie”.<sup>101</sup> Council members also continued to discuss the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant established pursuant to resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) under the item entitled, “Threats to international peace and security”.<sup>102</sup>

#### *Inclusion of new sub-items under existing items*

During the period under review, the Council continued its practice of adding new sub-items to existing items for the consideration of evolving general

and cross-border threats to international peace and security. As described in more detail in section I above, videoconferences, whether open or closed, were not considered formal meetings of the Council for all relevant purposes, including the agenda of the Council and their subsequent inclusion in the summary statement of the Secretary-General on items of which the Council is seized.<sup>103</sup> Accordingly, while the Secretary-General continued to notify the General Assembly of the matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security which were being dealt with by the Council in the context of meetings, he did not do so when those matters were discussed in the context of open videoconferences.<sup>104</sup> Similarly, videoconferences were focused on a variety of topics that were not considered as formal sub-items. Tables 10 and 11 list a selection of new sub-items and topics introduced in 2020 in chronological order of their introduction.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>103</sup> For more information, see part IV, sect. I.C.

<sup>104</sup> See [A/75/300](#).

<sup>105</sup> The tables exclude cases of routine sub-items relating to briefings by Council missions, briefings by the Chairs of the Council committees, letters addressed to the President of the Council, reports of the Secretary-General and meetings of the Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#), annex II, sections A and B.

<sup>100</sup> See [S/2020/1037](#). For more information, see part I, sect. 35.

<sup>101</sup> See [S/PV.8711](#) and [S/2020/893](#). For more information, see part I, sect. 36.

<sup>102</sup> See [S/2020/547](#) and [S/2020/1193](#). For more information, see part I, sect. 34.

Table 10

#### **New sub-items added to existing items at formal meetings, 2020**

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>New sub-item</i>
<a href="#">S/PV.8699</a> 9 January 2020 <sup>a</sup>	Maintenance of international peace and security	Upholding the United Nations Charter
<a href="#">S/PV.8711</a> 30 January 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<a href="#">S/PV.8721</a> 12 February 2020	Children and armed conflict	Integrating child protection into peace processes
<a href="#">S/PV.8723</a> 13 February 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	Transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations
<a href="#">S/PV.8733</a> 26 February 2020	Non-proliferation	Supporting the Non-Proliferation Treaty ahead of the 2020 Review Conference
<a href="#">S/PV.8743</a> 11 March 2020	Peace and security in Africa	Countering terrorism and extremism in Africa
<a href="#">S/PV.8756</a> 10 September 2020	Children and armed conflict	Attacks against schools as a grave violation of children’s rights

<sup>a</sup> The 8699th meeting was resumed on 10 and 13 January 2020 (see [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 1\)](#) and [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 2\)](#)).

Table 11  
New topics introduced in connection with existing items at open videoconferences, 2020

<i>Videoconference record and date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Topic</i>
<a href="#">S/2020/340</a> 21 April 2020	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	Protection of civilians from conflict-induced hunger
<a href="#">S/2020/418</a> 15 May 2020	Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2017/507</a> )	Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council
<a href="#">S/2020/663</a> 2 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Implications of COVID-19
<a href="#">S/2020/674</a> 7 July 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Peace operations and human rights
<a href="#">S/2020/727</a> 17 July 2020	Women and peace and security	Conflict-related sexual violence
<a href="#">S/2020/751</a> 24 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Climate and security
<a href="#">S/2020/799</a> 12 August 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace
<a href="#">S/2020/893</a> 8 September 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	Role of the International Organisation of La Francophonie
<a href="#">S/2020/929</a> 17 September 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security
<a href="#">S/2020/953</a> 24 September 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Global governance after COVID-19
<a href="#">S/2020/1037</a> 20 October 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf region
<a href="#">S/2020/1090</a> 3 November 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	Contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity
<a href="#">S/2020/1286</a> 21 December 2020	The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security	Strengthening the cooperation between the Security Council and the International Court of Justice

## B. Matters of which the Security Council is seized (rules 10 and 11)

During the period under review, pursuant to rule 11 of the provisional rules of procedure and the note by the President dated 30 August 2017,<sup>106</sup> the Secretary-General continued to communicate each week to the members on the Council a summary statement of matters of which the Council was seized and of the stage reached in their consideration.<sup>107</sup> The

practice of including an agenda item in the summary statement upon its adoption at a formal meeting of the Council remained unchanged. As explained above, however, since videoconferences were not considered formal meetings of the Council, the Secretary-General did not include in his weekly summary statement of matters of which the Council was seized those matters that were discussed in the context of open videoconferences.

In accordance with the note by the President dated 30 August 2017, the preliminary annual summary statement of matters of which the Council is seized

<sup>106</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, paras. 13 and 14.

<sup>107</sup> See, for example, [S/2020/10/Add.1](#) and [S/2020/10/Add.2](#).

issued by the Secretary-General in January each year, identifies the items that have not been considered by the Council during the preceding three calendar years and which are therefore subject to deletion. An item is deleted unless a Member State notifies the President of the Council, by the end of February, of its request that the item be retained on the list, in which case the item will remain on the list for an additional year. If no Member State requests the item's retention on the list, the first summary statement issued in March of that year reflects its deletion.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>108</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, paras. 15 and 16.

During the period under review, in accordance with rule 11 and the note by the President dated 30 August 2017, the Council continued the practice of reviewing the summary statement at the beginning of each year in order to determine whether the Council had concluded its consideration of any items.<sup>109</sup> In 2020, of the 13 items identified for deletion in January, none were deleted and all were retained for one additional year at the request of Member States, as shown in table 12.<sup>110</sup>

<sup>109</sup> See [S/2020/10](#).

<sup>110</sup> See [S/2020/10/Add.9](#).

Table 12

**Items proposed for deletion from the summary statement, 2020**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Date of first and last consideration</i>	<i>Status in March 2020</i>
The India-Pakistan question	6 January 1948; 5 November 1965	Retained
The Hyderabad question	16 September 1948; 24 May 1949	Retained
Letter dated 20 February 1958 from the representative of the Sudan addressed to the Secretary-General	21 February 1958; 21 February 1958	Retained
Letter dated 11 July 1960 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council	18 July 1960; 5 January 1961	Retained
Letter dated 31 December 1960 from the Minister for External Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council	4 January 1961; 5 January 1961	Retained
The situation in the India/Pakistan subcontinent	4 December 1971; 27 December 1971	Retained
Letter dated 3 December 1971 from the Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council	9 December 1971; 9 December 1971	Retained
Complaint by Cuba	17 September 1973; 18 September 1973	Retained
The situation between Iran and Iraq	26 September 1980; 31 January 1991	Retained
Letter dated 1 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council	2 October 1985; 4 October 1985	Retained
Letter dated 19 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council	21 April 1988; 25 April 1988	Retained
Letter dated 2 February 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council	9 February 1990; 9 February 1990	Retained
The situation in Georgia	8 October 1992; 15 June 2009	Retained



*Items considered at Security Council meetings*

The Council remained seized of 69 items during the review period.<sup>111</sup> Out of the 69 items, the Council considered 29 items at its formal meetings, of which 18 were country- or region-specific and 11 were thematic. Council members also considered 35 items in the context of open videoconferences, of which 20 were country- or region-specific and 15 were thematic.<sup>112</sup> Council members considered a total of 42 items at meetings and videoconferences held in 2020, compared

with a total of 49 in 2019. Out of the 42 items, 23 addressed country-specific or regional situations and 19 addressed thematic or other issues.<sup>113</sup> In accordance with the letter from the President of the Council dated 2 April 2020, which provided that there was “no agreement to consider the discussions of the Council held on the virtual platform as formal meetings”, the consideration of items in videoconferences was not reflected in the summary statement of items of which the Council was seized nor in the annual communication to the General Assembly pursuant to Article 12 of the Charter.<sup>114</sup>

Table 13 provides an overview of the items on the agenda of the Council and the items considered at formal meetings of the Council and discussed at open videoconferences in 2020.

<sup>111</sup> See [S/2020/10](#).

<sup>112</sup> The total figure of 15 thematic items excludes the item entitled “Non-proliferation/Democratic People’s Republic of Korea” since it was not considered in an open videoconference in 2020 and resolution [2515 \(2020\)](#) under the item was not announced at an open videoconference owing to technical difficulties. For more information, see part I, sect. 32.B. Following established practice to hold private meetings under the item entitled “Briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice”, the Council members heard the annual briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice on 28 October 2020 in a closed videoconference.

<sup>113</sup> In 2020, the Council considered one item, entitled “Election of five members of the International Court of Justice”, that had not been on the list of items of which the Council was seized ([S/PV.8773](#)).

<sup>114</sup> See [S/2020/273](#). For further details, see sect. III.A above and part IV, sect. I.C.

Table 13

**Items on the agenda of the Council and their consideration at formal meetings and discussion at open videoconferences, 2020**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Considered at a formal meeting</i>	<i>Discussed at an open videoconference</i>
<b>Country-specific and regional situations</b>		
<b>Africa</b>		
Central African region	No	Yes
Letter dated 20 February 1958 from the representative of the Sudan addressed to the Secretary-General	No	No
Letter dated 1 October 1985 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council	No	No
Letter dated 19 April 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council	No	No
Peace and security in Africa	Yes	Yes
Peace consolidation in West Africa	Yes	Yes
Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Yes	Yes
The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Yes	Yes
The situation concerning Western Sahara	No	Yes
The situation in Burundi	No	No
The situation in Côte d’Ivoire	No	No
The situation in the Great Lakes region	Yes	Yes

**Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2020**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Considered at a formal meeting</i>	<i>Discussed at an open videoconference</i>
The situation in Guinea-Bissau	Yes	No
The situation in Liberia	No	No
The situation in Libya	Yes	Yes
The situation in Mali	Yes	Yes
The situation in Somalia	Yes	Yes
The situation in the Central African Republic	Yes	Yes
<b>Americas</b>		
Letter dated 11 July 1960 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council	No	No
Letter dated 31 December 1960 from the Minister for External Affairs of Cuba addressed to the President of the Security Council	No	No
Complaint by Cuba	No	No
Letter dated 2 February 1990 from the Permanent Representative of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council	No	No
Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2016/53</a> )	Yes	Yes
The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	No	Yes
The question concerning Haiti	Yes	Yes
<b>Asia</b>		
The situation in Afghanistan	Yes	Yes
The situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea	No	No
The Hyderabad question	No	No
The India-Pakistan question	No	No
The situation in the India/Pakistan subcontinent	No	No
The situation in Myanmar	No	No
<b>Europe</b>		
The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	No	Yes
The situation in Cyprus	Yes	No
The situation in Georgia	No	No
Letter dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2014/136</a> )	No	No
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 ( <a href="#">S/2014/264</a> )	Yes	No
Security Council resolutions <a href="#">1160 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1199 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1203 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1239 (1999)</a> and <a href="#">1244 (1999)</a>	No	Yes



<i>Item</i>	<i>Considered at a formal meeting</i>	<i>Discussed at an open videoconference</i>
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 ( <a href="#">S/2018/218</a> )	No	No
<b>Middle East</b>		
Letter dated 3 December 1971 from the Permanent Representatives of Algeria, Iraq, the Libyan Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/10409</a> )	No	No
The situation between Iran and Iraq	No	No
The situation concerning Iraq	Yes	Yes
The situation between Iraq and Kuwait	No	No
The situation in the Middle East	Yes	Yes
The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Yes	Yes
<b>Total, country-specific and regional situations</b>	<b>18 items</b>	<b>20 items</b>
<b>Thematic and other issues</b>		
Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe	Yes	No
Briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council	No	Yes
Briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice	No	No
Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	No	No
Briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	No	Yes
Children and armed conflict	Yes	Yes
Consideration of the draft report of the Security Council to the General Assembly	Yes	No
Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	Yes	Yes
General issues relating to sanctions	No	No
Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2017/507</a> )	No	Yes
International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Yes	Yes
Maintenance of international peace and security	Yes	Yes
Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B	Yes	No
Non-proliferation	Yes	Yes
Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea	No	No <sup>a</sup>
Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction	No	No
Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	Yes	Yes
The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security	No	Yes

<i>Item</i>	<i>Considered at a formal meeting</i>	<i>Discussed at an open videoconference</i>
Protection of civilians in armed conflict	No	Yes
Security Council mission	No	No
Small arms	Yes	No
Threats to international peace and security	No	Yes
Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	Yes	Yes
United Nations peacekeeping operations	No	Yes
Women and peace and security	No	Yes
<b>Total, thematic and other issues</b>	<b>11 items</b>	<b>15 items</b>
<b>Total number of items on the agenda<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>69 items</b>	<b>69 items</b>
<b>Total number of items considered</b>	<b>29 items</b>	<b>35 items</b>

<sup>a</sup> Owing to technical difficulties, instead of an open videoconference to announce the vote on resolution [2515 \(2020\)](#) the videoconference was closed.

<sup>b</sup> In 2020, the Council considered one item, entitled “Election of five members of the International Court of Justice”, that had not been on the list of items of which the Council was seized ([S/PV.8773](#)).

## C. Discussions concerning the agenda

During the period under review, Council members discussed the agenda and matters of which the Council was seized in several meetings and videoconferences.

At the 8699th meeting of the Council, held on 9, 10 and 13 January under the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security” and the sub-item entitled “Upholding the United Nations Charter”, the representative of Eritrea said that with regard to the Council’s agenda, there was a tendency towards the entrenchment of situations in which Chapter VII had been invoked. Although the Council may have explicitly concluded its consideration of an item and removed it from the list of matters of which the Council was seized, it had done so with great infrequency and, in some instances, matters had remained on the Council’s agenda for extended periods, which led to a lack of clarity in assessing both the purpose and the end point of Council responses to threats to peace.<sup>115</sup> At an open videoconference<sup>116</sup> held on 27 April in connection with the same item and focused on youth and peace and security, the delegation of Canada expressed strong support for the inclusion of youth and peace and security as a standing item on the agenda of the Council. In addition, the representative of Belgium noted his Government’s

commitment to putting the topic of climate and security on the Council’s agenda, underlining the particular vulnerability of younger demographics to the climate crisis.

The agenda of the Council was discussed in more detail at open videoconferences in connection with the items entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security” and “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#))”<sup>117</sup> (see cases 2 and 3).

### Case 2 Maintenance of international peace and security

On 24 July, at the initiative of Germany, which held the presidency for the month,<sup>118</sup> Council members held an open videoconference<sup>119</sup> in connection with the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security”, focusing on climate and security. At the videoconference, Council members heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, the Director of the Centre national d’études stratégiques et de sécurité of the Niger and the Director of Sustainable Pacific Consultancy, Niue. All Council members spoke during

<sup>117</sup> See [S/2020/751](#) and [S/2020/418](#).

<sup>118</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 18 July 2020 ([S/2020/725](#)). For more information on the discussion, see part V, sect. I.B, case 4.

<sup>119</sup> See [S/2020/751](#).

<sup>115</sup> See [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 2\)](#).

<sup>116</sup> See [S/2020/346](#).

the videoconference.<sup>120</sup> The representatives of Belize, Denmark, Fiji, Ireland, Kenya, Nauru and the European Union also made statements. In addition, 29 delegations from non-Council members submitted their statements in writing.<sup>121</sup>

During the discussion, some Council members advocated for climate and security to feature regularly on the agenda of the Council.<sup>122</sup> The representative of the Dominican Republic underlined the need for the creation of the necessary mandate to ensure that the topic of the effects of climate change on international peace and security figured regularly on the Council's agenda. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Development Cooperation of Belgium said that, while some did not think that climate change belonged on the Council's agenda, the Council should have a broader role in addressing climate-related security risks, as articulated by Article 1 of the Charter. He expressed support for mechanisms to provide better information and reporting to the Council, as well as the mainstreaming of climate-related security risks into relevant Council action. The Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia of the United Kingdom emphasized that his delegation had kept the issue of climate security high on the Council's agenda since it was first brought to the Council in 2007. Above all, the Council needed an evidence-based approach to climate security threats by which it could tailor solutions to the fragile and conflict-affected States on its agenda.

The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, pointing out that a number of situations on the Council's agenda provided clear evidence that the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events had a tangible impact on security, said that the Council had unfortunately, because of a lack of collective political will, not been able to include climate and security considerations in numerous resolutions. She further encouraged the integration of climate security assessments in all mandated reports of

situations on the Council's agenda and advocated for the appointment of a special representative on climate and security to coordinate response efforts across all pillars of the United Nations system, as well as to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations so as to promote comprehensive action.

In their written contributions, some delegations of non-Council members echoed the call for meetings on climate and security to be held on a regular basis.<sup>123</sup> The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence of Ireland, advocating for the Council to play its part by addressing the peace and security challenges of climate change, welcomed the announcement of the establishment of an informal group of experts of the Council on climate and security. The delegation of Czechia expressed strong support for the inclusion of debates related to the implications of climate change for international peace and security on the regular agenda of the Council. The delegation of Cyprus considered that the Council had a significant contribution to make, in particular with regard to the prevention of conflicts that could be anticipated as a result of climate change and that the Council could already start to consider the impact of climate change on the conflicts on its agenda. The representative of the United Arab Emirates added that the Council would benefit from enhanced and standardized analysis of the security implications of climate change in situations on the Council's agenda. The representative of Liechtenstein called on the Council to strengthen its engagement on the climate and security nexus through regular briefings and, in the interim, make more systematic references to the impact of global warming on Council situations. In a similar vein, the representative of Portugal expressed his delegation's belief that the time was ripe for the Council to deal with the climate and security nexus in a more systematic way.

Other participants, however, cautioned against adding climate security to the Council's agenda<sup>124</sup> and suggested that the Council approach the issue on a case-by-case basis.<sup>125</sup> The representative of South Africa stated that introducing climate change as a thematic issue on the agenda of the Council would risk diffusing the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which held the primary mandate and capabilities to galvanize

<sup>120</sup> The following 11 Council members submitted written statements: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, United Kingdom and Viet Nam. Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam were represented at the ministerial level.

<sup>121</sup> Brazil, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Nepal, Nigeria, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Senegal, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tuvalu and United Arab Emirates.

<sup>122</sup> Belgium, Viet Nam, United Kingdom, Dominican Republic, France and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

<sup>123</sup> Fiji, Cyprus, Czechia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Switzerland and United Arab Emirates.

<sup>124</sup> South Africa, Brazil and India.

<sup>125</sup> China and Mexico.

that type of action by the international community and enjoyed universal membership, and detract attention and resources from its work. He noted that there were reasonable questions about when and on what scientific basis the Council would invoke climate change as a contributing factor to a specific conflict situation and where precisely the Council drew the line with respect to incorporating environmental issues into its agenda. The representative of Brazil expressed his country's opinion that while remaining sensitive to the impact of climate change on the most vulnerable countries and considering ways through which development issues could be better integrated into peace efforts, the international community must avoid taking steps that could lead to the "securitization of the climate change agenda" and therefore should proceed with utmost caution before branding emerging concerns as outright threats to international peace and security. Maintaining that the Council was mandated to deal with concrete, immediate threats to international peace and security, the representative of Brazil added that the Council should abstain from adopting blanket statements and instead assess threats to international peace and security on a case-by-case basis. Similarly, the delegation of India emphasized that climate change was a multidimensional issue and therefore viewing it through the narrow prism of security was akin to oversimplifying the issue and taking it out of context. India encouraged the international community to be cautious about securitizing climate change and to strengthen instead the existing mechanisms, not redress the issue through punitive measures administered by the Council. The representative of China stated that the Council, as the organ handling international peace and security, should act in line with the mandates of the relevant resolutions, analyse security challenges and the security implications of climate change for the countries concerned and discuss and handle relevant issues on a country-specific basis. The delegation of Mexico submitted that just as the response to climate change must be guided by the best available scientific knowledge, the Council must have the best analyses, on a case-by-case basis and in specific situations that fell within its competence, which was how the Council's decision-making could be efficient and effective while taking into account the reality on the ground.

### Case 3

#### Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

On 15 May, at the joint initiative of Estonia, which held the presidency for the month, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, whose representative held

the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions,<sup>126</sup> the Council held an open videoconference in connection with the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)", focusing on the issue of ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the working methods of the Council.<sup>127</sup>

During the discussion, the representative of the Russian Federation stressed the importance of the Council sticking to its priorities and focusing on major issues of great urgency representing threats to international peace and security. He further appealed for the Council agenda not to be "overloaded and abused" with the consideration of thematic subjects on the agenda of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council or other United Nations bodies. The representative of China stated that the Council should concentrate on regional and international hotspot issues, promote the political settlement of disputes and continue to keep Africa as its priority. He added that on thematic issues that went beyond its mandate, the Council should work in close coordination with other United Nations bodies, such as the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The representative of Cuba cautioned against the "selective manipulation" of the Security Council's working methods and practices, particularly with regard to introducing issues that were not part of its agenda, and suggested that the Council align its functions with the mandate conferred upon it by the Charter of the United Nations. In that connection, she suggested that the Council should focus on addressing the most urgent problems representing threats to international peace and security and stop interference in matters beyond its purview, in particular those concerning the mandate of the Assembly.

The delegation of Canada maintained that the COVID-19 pandemic carried significant economic repercussions and would have long-lasting impacts on peace and security. This demanded that the Council focus more on conflict prevention and economic security. The delegation of Cyprus called for regular dialogue between Member States on the Council's agenda and the President of the Council, which should provide affected States with information regarding the work of the Council that directly affected them. The representative of Turkey considered better incorporation of conflict prevention into the Council's

<sup>126</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/374).

<sup>127</sup> See S/2020/418. For more information on the videoconference, see case 1 above.

agenda as an improvement to the Council's working methods. He added that there was broad consensus among Member States on the need to enhance efforts for prevention, including through mediation efforts. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that

Council members should continue to subject the Council's programme of work to critical analysis and be prepared to bring new issues to the Council, noting that the COVID-19 crisis meant that the Council's work on prevention was more important than ever.

## IV. Representation and credentials

### Note

Section IV covers the practice of the Council concerning representation and the credentials of its members, in relation to rules 13 to 17 of the provisional rules of procedure.

#### Rule 13

*Each member of the Security Council shall be represented at the meetings of the Security Council by an accredited representative. The credentials of a representative on the Security Council shall be communicated to the Secretary-General not less than twenty-four hours before he takes his seat on the Security Council. The credentials shall be issued either by the Head of the State or of the Government concerned or by its Minister of Foreign Affairs. The Head of Government or Minister of Foreign Affairs of each member of the Security Council shall be entitled to sit on the Security Council without submitting credentials.*

#### Rule 14

*Any Member of the United Nations not a member of the Security Council and any State not a Member of the United Nations, if invited to participate in a meeting or meetings of the Security Council, shall submit credentials for the representative appointed by it for this purpose. The credentials of such a representative shall be communicated to the Secretary-General not less than twenty-four hours before the first meeting which he is invited to attend.*

#### Rule 15

*The credentials of representatives on the Security Council and of any representative appointed in accordance with rule 14 shall be examined by the Secretary-General who shall submit a report to the Security Council for approval.*

#### Rule 16

*Pending the approval of the credentials of a representative on the Security Council in accordance with rule 15, such representative shall be seated provisionally with the same rights as other representatives.*

#### Rule 17

*Any representative on the Security Council, to whose credentials objection has been made within the Security Council, shall continue to sit with the same rights as other representatives until the Security Council has decided the matter.*

During the period under review, in accordance with rule 13 of the provisional rules of procedure, the credentials of the representatives of the members of the Council were communicated to the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General subsequently submitted his report to the Council pursuant to rule 15. Such reports were transmitted to the Council when there were changes in the representation of the members of the Council,<sup>128</sup> as well as when representatives of the newly elected members of the Council were designated prior to the beginning of each term.<sup>129</sup> No discussions regarding the interpretation and application of rules 13 to 17 arose during the period under review.

Rule 13 was referenced in two communications in connection with the applicability of the provisional rules of procedure to videoconferences, which were held in lieu of in-person meetings as part of the working methods of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic. As indicated in the letters dated 2 April and 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council, it was established that the Council would conduct its work "in the spirit" of the provisional rules of procedure, which included ensuring that all Council members participating in a virtual discussion were represented by appropriately credentialed delegates, pursuant to rule 13.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>128</sup> See, for example, [S/2020/88](#), [S/2020/177](#), [S/2020/290](#), [S/2020/510](#), [S/2020/812](#), [S/2020/1186](#), [S/2020/1196](#), [S/2020/1223](#), [S/2020/1230](#), [S/2020/1239](#) and [S/2020/1331](#).

<sup>129</sup> For the reports of the Secretary-General concerning the credentials of the representatives and deputies and alternate representatives of members of the Council elected for the periods of 2020 to 2021 and 2021 to 2022, see [S/2019/1023](#), [S/2020/89](#) and [S/2020/1318](#).

<sup>130</sup> See [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).



## V. Presidency

### Note

Section V covers the practice of the Council concerning the monthly rotation of the presidency, the role of the President and the temporary cession of the chair by the President during the consideration of a particular question with which the Member State he or she represents is directly connected, in relation to rules 18 to 20 of the provisional rules of procedure.

#### Rule 18

*The presidency of the Security Council shall be held in turn by the members of the Security Council in the English alphabetical order of their names. Each President shall hold office for one calendar month.*

#### Rule 19

*The President shall preside over the meetings of the Security Council and, under the authority of the Security Council, shall represent it in its capacity as an organ of the United Nations.*

#### Rule 20

*Whenever the President of the Security Council deems that for the proper fulfilment of the responsibilities of the presidency he should not preside over the Council during the consideration of a particular question with which the member he represents is directly connected, he shall indicate his decision to the Council. The presidential chair shall then devolve, for the purpose of the consideration of that question, on the representative of the member next in English alphabetical order; it being understood that the provisions of this rule shall apply to the representatives on the Security Council called upon successively to preside. This rule shall not affect the representative capacity of the President as stated in rule 19, or his duties under rule 7.*

This section comprises two subsections, namely: A. The role of the President of the Security Council (rules 18 and 19); and B. Discussions concerning the presidency of the Security Council. In 2020, there were no instances of the application of rule 20.

### A. Role of the President of the Security Council (rules 18 and 19)

During the period under review, in accordance with rule 18 of the provisional rules of procedure, the presidency of the Council was held in turn for one

calendar month by the members of the Council in English alphabetical order. In addition to continuing to preside over meetings of the Council, informal consultations of the whole and informal interactive dialogues, the President of the Council also presided over videoconferences held in lieu of in-person meetings. In accordance with rule 18 and the note by the President dated 30 August 2017,<sup>131</sup> the President continued to perform several other functions under the authority of the Council, including: (a) briefing non-members of the Council and the media on the monthly programme of work at the beginning of the month and holding “wrap-up” sessions with non-Council members and briefings with the media at the end of the presidency; (b) representing the Council and delivering statements on its behalf, including the presentation of the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly;<sup>132</sup> (c) holding monthly meetings with the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly; and (d) delivering statements or elements to the press following informal consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences and whenever Council members reached an agreement on a text.<sup>133</sup>

In 2020, 11 out of the 12 presidencies held wrap-up sessions, the majority of which were conducted by videoconference and in accordance with the note by the President dated 27 December 2019 (S/2019/994) under the “Toledo-style” format whereby members of the Council presented the activity of the Council for the month jointly and in an interactive manner.<sup>134</sup> Council members also continued to submit, in their national capacities, monthly assessments

<sup>131</sup> S/2017/507.

<sup>132</sup> At its 8746th meeting, on 14 July (see S/PV.8746), the Council issued a note by the President (see S/2020/666) adopting its report to the General Assembly covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019 (see A/74/2). The report was introduced to the Assembly at a virtual informal meeting of the plenary of its seventy-fourth session on 31 August 2020 by the President of the Council for the month of August (Indonesia). See also part IV, sect. I.F.

<sup>133</sup> Council presidencies referred to the practice of delivering press statements and elements to the press in their respective monthly assessments (see, for example, S/2020/344, S/2020/558, S/2020/789, S/2020/1045, S/2020/1102, S/2020/1142 and S/2021/9).

<sup>134</sup> See, for example, the letter dated 27 October 2020 from the representative of Indonesia to the President of the Council transmitting the monthly assessment of its presidency in August 2020, with reference to the wrap-up session held by videoconference (S/2020/1045).

providing an overview of the work of the Council during their presidencies.<sup>135</sup>

In 2020, 10 out of 12 Council presidencies circulated among Council members at the beginning of the month “monthly commitments” on working methods of the Council, which consisted of a list of commitments to enhance the implementation of the note by the President dated 30 August 2017<sup>136</sup> as well as the eight notes by the President dated 27 December 2019<sup>137</sup> as a means of ensuring transparency, interactivity and efficiency in the work of the Council.<sup>138</sup> The measures featured in the monthly commitments included, for example, reminding briefers and members and non-members of the Council to limit their statements to the time limits prescribed in the note by the President dated 30 August 2017; encouraging the participation of civil society and women briefers and the Council’s engagement with concerned Member States and other principal organs of the United Nations; and encouraging interactivity in informal consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences and facilitating agreement on press statements and press elements at their conclusion.

The presidency also assumed several responsibilities on behalf of Council members as part of the working methods adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the permanent representatives of the members of the Council, it was agreed that, on the first day of the month, the presidency would issue and circulate an “informal plan” of videoconferences to the wider membership of the United Nations and publish it on the websites of the Council and

its delegation.<sup>139</sup> The day before a videoconference, the presidency would share with the wider membership, through email, a message from the President of the Council in which the videoconference would be announced, with the message also being made available in the programme of work on the website of the Council.<sup>140</sup> In a letter from the President of the Council dated 7 May 2020, it was further agreed that the presidency would inform the public of the daily programme of the Council through social media on the day of the event, prior to the meeting.<sup>141</sup> In addition, both letters established that, to the extent possible and in agreement with Council members, the presidency would deliver any agreed elements to the press after closed videoconferences through the United Nations webcast.<sup>142</sup>

Following previous practice, and in accordance with the note by the President dated 30 August 2017, the introduction to the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly for 2019 was prepared under the coordination of the President of the Council for the month of September 2019 (Russian Federation).<sup>143</sup>

In 2020, during their respective presidencies, Council members continued to take the initiative of bringing to the attention of the Council emerging and evolving issues related to international peace and security by organizing Council meetings or open videoconferences, under thematic items, sometimes adding new sub-items or proposing new topics.<sup>144</sup> In most cases, Council presidencies transmitted concept

<sup>135</sup> In 2020, Council members submitted 10 monthly assessments: [S/2020/258](#), [S/2020/1142](#), [S/2020/344](#), [S/2020/558](#), [S/2020/1102](#), [S/2020/789](#), [S/2021/9](#), [S/2020/1045](#), [S/2020/1333](#) and [S/2021/203](#) (in chronological order).

<sup>136</sup> [S/2017/507](#), annex.

<sup>137</sup> [S/2019/990](#) to [S/2019/997](#).

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, the letter dated 10 November 2020 from the representative of Estonia to the President of the Council describing working methods encouraged during the presidencies of Estonia, France and Germany in May, June and July 2020 ([S/2020/1102](#)) and the letter dated 26 February 2021 from the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the President of the Council referring to the working method commitments of the African members of the Council and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines implemented during the presidencies of the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa during their presidencies in September, November and December 2020 ([S/2021/203](#)).

<sup>139</sup> See [S/2020/273](#). See also [S/2020/372](#) in connection with the circulation and publication of the “informal programme of work” during the presidency of Estonia in May 2020.

<sup>140</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>141</sup> See [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>142</sup> See [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>143</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 127. In accordance with the note by the President, as the President of the Council in July 2019 (Peru) ended its tenure on the Council that year, the task of coordinating the introduction devolved on the Council member next in English alphabetical order who would not be leaving the Council that year (Russian Federation). For more information, see part IV, sect. I.F. See also [S/PV.8746](#).

<sup>144</sup> For more information on referrals by Member States pursuant to Article 35 of the Charter, see part VI, sect. I.A.



papers in order to guide the discussion.<sup>145</sup> Some of them also circulated summaries of the meetings.<sup>146</sup> In a letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council, the representatives of Estonia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines jointly transmitted a concept note for an open videoconference in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President (S/2017/507)”, which was organized during the presidency of Estonia on 15 May.<sup>147</sup> While not formal meetings of the Council, Council presidencies also circulated concept notes in their national capacity to guide the discussion during open videoconferences.<sup>148</sup> On occasion, some Council members circulated summaries of Arria-formula meetings they hosted or co-hosted during their presidencies, again also in their national capacities.<sup>149</sup>

During the period under review, the role of the presidency was mentioned in several communications to the Council from members and non-members of the Council. In a letter dated 11 February 2020 addressed to the President of the Council, the representative of Finland transmitted the report of the seventeenth annual workshop for the newly elected members of the Council, which was held on 7 and 8 November 2019. According to the report, workshop participants discussed the role of the presidency in ensuring a balance between transparency and efficiency,

promoting interactivity, time management and the preparation of monthly assessments.<sup>150</sup> Similarly, in a letter dated 3 March 2020 addressed to the President of the Council, the representatives of Kuwait and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, as the outgoing and incoming Chairs of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, jointly transmitted a report<sup>151</sup> on the informal retreat held from 17 to 19 January 2020 on the working methods of the Council. As indicated in the report, Council members discussed the significance of the role of the presidency in ensuring the implementation of the working methods of the Council, in particular with respect to the conduct of meetings, including adherence to prescribed time limits by speakers, the preparation of the annual report of the Council to the General Assembly, engagement with other principal organs of the United Nations and the conduct of wrap-up sessions.

## B. Discussions concerning the presidency of the Council

In 2020, aspects of the presidency of the Council were discussed during Council meetings and open videoconferences. During an open videoconference<sup>152</sup> held on 25 August 2020 in connection with the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, Council members discussed the future course of action by the President of the Council pursuant to the letter from the United States of 20 August 2020,<sup>153</sup> in which the United States notified the Council that the Islamic Republic of Iran was in significant non-performance of its commitment under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action of 2015. During the videoconference,<sup>154</sup> the representative of the Russian Federation stated that an overwhelming majority of Council members had explicitly stated in their responses to the letter of the United States that the letter could not be considered as a notification under paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015) and that it did not trigger the corresponding “snapback” procedure, since the United States had ceased its participation in the Plan of Action. He therefore requested the President of the Council to inform Council members about the results of his bilateral consultations with Council members on the issue and to

<sup>145</sup> See, for example, the letter dated 31 December 2019 from the representative of Viet Nam to the Secretary-General (S/2020/1) transmitting a concept note on the sub-item of “Upholding the Charter of the United Nations to maintain international peace and security” prior to the 8699th meeting of the Council, on 9 January 2020 (S/PV.8699); the letter dated 22 June 2020 from the representative of Germany to the Secretary-General (S/2020/571) transmitting a concept note on the theme “Pandemics and security” prior to the open videoconference held on 2 July 2020 (S/2020/663); and the letter dated 1 September 2020 from the representative of the Niger to the Secretary-General (S/2020/883) transmitting a concept note on the theme “Global governance after COVID-19” prior to the open videoconference held on 24 September 2020 (S/2020/953).

<sup>146</sup> See, for example, the letter dated 24 August 2020 from the Chargé d’affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the President of the Council (S/2020/830) transmitting a summary of the videoconference held on 24 July 2020 on the theme “Climate and security” (S/2020/751); and the letter dated 29 December 2020 from the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the Secretary-General (S/2020/1328) transmitting a summary of the videoconference held on 3 November 2020 on the theme “Contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity” (S/2020/1090).

<sup>147</sup> See S/2020/374.

<sup>148</sup> See, for example, S/2020/389 and S/2020/783.

<sup>149</sup> See S/2020/458 and S/2020/643.

<sup>150</sup> See S/2020/116.

<sup>151</sup> See S/2020/172.

<sup>152</sup> See S/2020/837.

<sup>153</sup> See also the letter dated 20 August 2020 from the representative of the United States to the President of the Council (S/2020/815). For more information on the discussion regarding the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), see part I, sect. 32.A, and part V, sect. II.

<sup>154</sup> See S/2020/837.

clarify whether he intended to follow the procedures foreseen in paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015). The representative of China urged the President of the Council not to take any action pursuant to the letter of the United States, adding that the Council should fully respect the views of the international community and the overwhelming majority of Council members, uphold its credibility and authority and fulfil its responsibility of maintaining international peace and security. The representative of Estonia stated that, since there was no agreement among the participants of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding the status of the United States as a participant in the agreement, his delegation supported the Council's presidency in considering the notification as ineffective for the purposes of the "snapback". The representative of Germany expressed support for the President's view that the purported United States notification was, in legal terms, null and void. Responding to questions and comments from Council members, the representative of Indonesia, in his capacity as President of the Council, stated that, given that there was no consensus in the Council on the issue, the President was not in the position to take further action.

At the open videoconference<sup>155</sup> held on 21 October in connection with the item entitled "Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)", the representative of Germany considered that any picture of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia remained incomplete without the briefing by the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues and expressed regret that the briefing had been blocked by the President of the Council.

The role of the presidency of the Council was also referred to during the 8764th meeting of the Council under the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East" (see case 6) and in greater detail during the open videoconference, held in connection with the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)" (see case 4).

#### **Case 4** **Implementation of the note by the President of** **the Security Council (S/2017/507)**

On 15 May, at the initiative of Estonia, which held the presidency for the month, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, whose representative held the Chair of the Informal Working Group on

Documentation and Other Procedural Questions,<sup>156</sup> Council members held an open videoconference<sup>157</sup> on the working methods of the Council in connection with the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)", focusing on the issue of ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Council. In their statements, members and non-members of the Council shared their views regarding the role of the presidency of the Council in ensuring the transparency, efficiency and interactivity in the Council's work and facilitating the implementation of the working methods adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In her briefing, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions stated that, since its last in-person meeting, held on 12 March, the Council had needed to adapt its working methods so as to maintain a state of readiness to convene and take decisions under unprecedented extraordinary circumstances and highlighted the specific aspects of measures adopted under the presidencies of China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia. In its statement, the delegation of Mexico expressed appreciation for the measures adopted under the presidencies of China, the Dominican Republic and Estonia to adapt the working methods of the Council to the new circumstances imposed by the pandemic and thereby largely maintain the Council's level of effectiveness, efficiency and transparency. The delegation further expressed the hope that the lessons learned would drive future discussions on the required changes to working methods. Similarly, speaking on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions, the delegation of Chile noted that the three presidencies had recognized the need to maintain the working methods achieved prior to the pandemic, which had made it possible to implement a set of measures designed to ensure that the Council held as many meetings as possible in a transparent and participatory manner.

Regarding transparency, the representatives of Austria and Kuwait commended the three presidencies for circulating letters to keep the wider membership informed on the Council's working methods. Speaking on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, the representative of Switzerland welcomed the fact that all meetings taking place in lieu of briefings in the open Chamber were being webcast in their entirety, together with the

<sup>155</sup> See S/2020/1040.

<sup>156</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/374).

<sup>157</sup> See S/2020/418. For more information on the videoconference, see case 1 above.

circulation by the presidency of written briefings and statements by Council and non-Council members, where applicable, as documents of the Council. The delegation of Norway, speaking on behalf of the Nordic countries, commended the presidency of Estonia for using new and innovative digital solutions to make the open meetings publicly accessible, enabling better inclusion of women and civil society organizations and allowing Member States to deliver statements in Arria-formula meetings. The delegation of Ireland expressed gratitude to the recent presidencies for their efforts to increase the openness of the Council's work during the pandemic, including by seeking to adopt press elements after each closed videoconference.

More generally, the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions recognized the growing practice of written monthly commitments through which Council presidencies promoted the implementation of the note by the President of 30 August 2017<sup>158</sup> and the eight notes by the President dated 27 December 2019.<sup>159</sup> In that regard, multiple delegations underscored in their statements the important role of the presidency in ensuring transparency in the Council's work, including through the use of monthly briefings on the informal programme of work and wrap-up sessions to the wider membership of the United Nations.<sup>160,161</sup> The delegation of Egypt stated that periodic briefings should be given to the wider membership on the monthly programme of work and that their input should be taken into account when formulating it. Speaking on behalf of the 10 elected members of the Council, the representative of Viet Nam considered that presidencies, including those held by elected members, continued to engage closely with the wider membership, civil society representatives, the press and other stakeholders at various opportunities, including briefings on the monthly programme of work and wrap-up sessions.

Specifically on wrap-up sessions, the representative of Switzerland, on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, recalled that those events had been organized by 11 out of the previous 12 Council presidencies and had

overall been increasingly interactive. Nevertheless, the representatives of El Salvador and Singapore highlighted the need for the monthly briefings and wrap-up sessions to be more interactive and include greater analysis. The representative of Liechtenstein suggested that the interactivity of wrap-up sessions could be enhanced by inviting questions to be submitted in advance by the membership, which would result in having opening remarks addressing those questions rather than offering an overview of the past month. Speaking on behalf of 24 former elected members of the Council, the representative of New Zealand added that all Council members should be encouraged to participate actively in wrap-up sessions and should strive to be as candid as possible and proposed that organizers should seek questions ahead of time to better shape discussions. Furthermore, between the start of the presidency and wrap-up sessions, Council members should consider other ways throughout the month to keep the membership updated on the Council's work and products under consideration. He further encouraged the continued publication of the President's addendum in addition to the informal programme of work. Moreover, when there was no agreement on public remarks, he considered that Council Presidents should be empowered to address the media, in a manner that was respectful to other colleagues.

The representative of China encouraged presidencies to seek the views of concerned Member States and regional organizations before Council meetings and to maintain close coordination with the Presidents of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General. Moreover, he encouraged presidencies to better coordinate with each other to enhance integrity and synergy and avoid duplication. The delegation of Cyprus called for regular dialogue between Member States on the Council's agenda and the President of the Council, which should provide affected States with information regarding the work of the Council that directly affected them, instead of relying solely on the good will of individual members or the penholder.

Expressing hope that greater strides would be made to improve the timeliness and analysis of the Council's annual report to the General Assembly, the delegation of Norway further urged each Council presidency to submit their monthly assessments for inclusion in the report and to consider other ways for the circulation of the assessments when consensus was not possible.<sup>162</sup> The representative of El Salvador called for the continued issuance, in a timely manner,

<sup>158</sup> S/2017/507.

<sup>159</sup> S/2019/990 to S/2019/997.

<sup>160</sup> See S/2020/418.

<sup>161</sup> Viet Nam (on behalf of the elected members of the Council), Australia, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Singapore and Switzerland (on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group).

<sup>162</sup> Norway spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries.

of monthly assessments, which should include, in addition to a summary of events, a situational analysis on current and future threats to international peace and

security. Several speakers called for more analytical content of the annual report to the Assembly.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>163</sup> Brazil, Cuba, Ireland, Lebanon, Mexico and Nigeria.

## VI. Secretariat

### Note

Section VI covers the practice of the Council concerning the functions and powers of the Secretary-General in connection with meetings of the Council, in relation to rules 21 to 26 of its provisional rules of procedure.<sup>164</sup>

#### Rule 21

*The Secretary-General shall act in that capacity in all meetings of the Security Council. The Secretary-General may authorize a deputy to act in his place at meetings of the Security Council.*

#### Rule 22

*The Secretary-General, or his deputy acting on his behalf, may make either oral or written statements to the Security Council concerning any question under consideration by it.*

#### Rule 23

*The Secretary-General may be appointed by the Security Council, in accordance with rule 28, as rapporteur for a specified question.*

#### Rule 24

*The Secretary-General shall provide the staff required by the Security Council. This staff shall form a part of the Secretariat.*

#### Rule 25

*The Secretary-General shall give to representatives on the Security Council notice of meetings of the Security Council and of its commissions and committees.*

#### Rule 26

*The Secretary-General shall be responsible for the preparation of documents required by the Security Council and shall, except in urgent circumstances,*

*distribute them at least forty-eight hours in advance of the meeting at which they are to be considered.*

During the period under review and in accordance with previous practice, the Secretary-General and senior officials of the Secretariat continued to attend Council meetings and provide oral briefings and written reports to the Council as requested. The Council continued to request briefings by senior officials from the Secretariat.

In addition, in 2020 the Secretariat played a key role in supporting the implementation of the working methods adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the holding of videoconferences, carrying out the written voting procedure and, as of 14 July 2020, the resumption of in-person meetings in accordance with the necessary health and safety guidelines.<sup>165</sup>

The various functions of the Secretariat were addressed in several open videoconferences. At an open videoconference<sup>166</sup> held on 6 May in connection with the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security”, focusing on youth and peace and security, the delegation of Norway noted that there was more consistent reporting to the Council on youth-specific issues since the adoption of resolutions [2250 \(2015\)](#) and [2419 \(2018\)](#). In that regard, the delegation of Norway suggested mandating the Secretariat to report regularly on the youth and peace and security agenda. Similarly, the delegation of Fiji suggested that the Secretariat provide a detailed analysis of how the security impacts of climate change were affecting young people, especially women and girls, around the world, in particular in countries where United Nations political missions and peace operations were deployed.

At an open videoconference<sup>167</sup> held on 15 May in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507)”, the representative of the United Kingdom expressed support for the holding of informal horizon-scanning briefings by the Secretariat. The representative of Malaysia considered that the Council

<sup>164</sup> For specific instances in which the Secretary-General was requested or authorized by the Council to carry out other functions in accordance with Article 98, see part VI.

<sup>165</sup> For more information on the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, see sect. I above.

<sup>166</sup> See [S/2020/346](#).

<sup>167</sup> See [S/2020/418](#).



should request more early warning and situational awareness briefings from the Secretariat to ensure that emerging threats and issues were addressed swiftly. Referring to the importance of private discussions among Council members as opposed to public meetings, the representative of France considered that closed conversations between Council members and the Secretariat on the implementation of Council mandates were more productive than public statements on national positions. The representative of Slovakia maintained that reporting cycles for reports of the Secretary-General should be adjusted to reflect more genuinely the situation on the ground.

Speaking on behalf of the elected members of the Council, the representative of Viet Nam underscored the importance of early engagement in the work of the Council for incoming elected members, including briefings by the Secretariat conducted earlier in the preparation for membership. He further welcomed the fact that, based on a note by the President dated 27 December 2019,<sup>168</sup> incoming members were able to receive all Council communications for a period of five months before their membership and urged that, during the observation period, incoming members be able to observe the Council's work in various settings, including in consultations and negotiations on Council documents. With respect to the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, several delegations<sup>169</sup> commended the efforts of Council members and the Secretariat to adapt those methods to the new circumstances.

At an open videoconference<sup>170</sup> held on 29 July in connection with the item entitled "The situation in the

Middle East", focusing on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the representative of China questioned the effectiveness of humanitarian exemptions to unilateral sanctions imposed against the Syrian Arab Republic and requested a comprehensive report by the Secretariat on that issue. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed a desire to receive more information on the repositioning of the United Nations humanitarian deliveries to the north-west of the country in accordance with the new format of the work under the cross-border mechanism. Moreover, he expressed regret that his delegation's request for an additional briefer from the Secretariat on the possible environmental and humanitarian implications of an oil spill in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic was not treated appropriately, despite the obvious relevance of the topic to the discussion.

At an open videoconference<sup>171</sup> held on 12 August in connection with the item entitled "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace", focusing on pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace, the representative of the Russian Federation proposed that the Secretariat prepare a policy brief on the impact of sanctions on the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, which could include an assessment of the negative consequences of coercive measures for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. The representative of Ecuador called for compliance with the global ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian access and as a first step towards sustainable peace, as proposed by the Secretary-General. In reference to resolution 2532 (2020), she also submitted that it would be useful for the Council and the Secretariat to be regularly informed on where the resolution was being implemented and in which areas greater support was needed to ensure its effective implementation.

<sup>168</sup> See [S/2019/993](#).

<sup>169</sup> See [S/2020/418](#) (United Kingdom, India and Lebanon).

<sup>170</sup> See [S/2020/758](#).

<sup>171</sup> See [S/2020/799](#).

## VII. Conduct of business

### Note

Section VII covers the practice of the Council concerning the conduct of business at its meetings, in relation to rules 27, 29, 30 and 33 of its provisional rules of procedure.

#### Rule 27

*The President shall call upon representatives in the order in which they signify their desire to speak.*

#### Rule 29

*The President may accord precedence to any rapporteur appointed by the Security Council.*

*The Chairman of a commission or committee, or the rapporteur appointed by the commission or committee to present its report, may be accorded precedence for the purpose of explaining the report.*

#### Rule 30

*If a representative raises a point of order, the President shall immediately state his ruling. If it is challenged, the President shall submit his ruling to the*

*Security Council for immediate decision and it shall stand unless overruled.*

*Rule 33*

*The following motions shall have precedence in the order named over all principal motions and draft resolutions relative to the subject before the meeting:*

1. *To suspend the meeting;*
2. *To adjourn the meeting;*
3. *To adjourn the meeting to a certain day or hour;*
4. *To refer any matter to a committee, to the Secretary-General or to a rapporteur;*
5. *To postpone discussion of the question to a certain day or indefinitely;* or
6. *To introduce an amendment.*

*Any motion for the suspension or for the simple adjournment of the meeting shall be decided without debate.*

In 2020, no explicit reference was made to rules 27, 29 and 30 in the meetings of the Council. As part of the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the letters from the President of the Council dated 2 April and 7 May 2020 addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council provided that the presidencies of the Council intended to work “in the spirit of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure” including those under chapter VI, entitled “Conduct of business”.<sup>172</sup>

During the period under review, the President of the Council continued to request speakers to limit their statements in Council meetings to four minutes or to five minutes in accordance with the note by the President dated 30 August 2017.<sup>173</sup> For example, on 13 February, at the 8723rd meeting<sup>174</sup> of the Council, before giving the floor to non-Council members, the President reminded all speakers to limit their statements to no more than four minutes and noted that the red light on the collar of the microphone would begin to flash after four minutes had elapsed. The President added that delegations with longer statements were kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a summarized version when speaking in

the Security Council Chamber.<sup>175</sup> Following previous practice, during the period under review joint statements were delivered by Council members<sup>176</sup> and non-Council members invited to participate in Council meetings and videoconferences.<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, as part

<sup>175</sup> Ibid. For other examples, see [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 1\)](#), [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 2\)](#), [S/PV.8706](#) and [S/PV.8723 \(Resumption 1\)](#).

<sup>176</sup> In 2020, in a number of instances, the representatives of Niger, Tunisia and South Africa delivered joint statements on behalf of the three African members of the Council (referred to as “A3”), and on others they did so together with Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (referred to as “A3+1”) (see, for example, [S/PV.8731](#) and [S/2020/336](#)). Similarly, the representatives of Indonesia and Viet Nam occasionally delivered joint statements as the two States members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on the Council (see, for example, [S/PV.8767](#) and [S/2020/568](#)). At an open videoconference held on 15 May in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#))”, the representative of Viet Nam delivered a joint statement on behalf of the elected members of the Council ([S/2020/418](#)). In several instances, Council members also delivered joint statements as co-penholders on a particular issue (see, for example, [S/PV.8700](#), [S/PV.8748](#) and [S/2020/1257](#)).

<sup>177</sup> For example, at the 8699th meeting, held on 9 January under the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security”, the representative of the Philippines delivered a joint statement on behalf of the 10 member States of ASEAN; the representative of Norway spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries; the representative of Ukraine spoke also on behalf of Canada, Germany and Sweden; and the representative of Azerbaijan delivered a statement on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries (see [S/PV.8699](#) and [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 1\)](#)); and at the 8706th meeting, held on 21 January under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, the representative of Portugal spoke on behalf of the States members of the European Union, the representative of Azerbaijan spoke on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the representative of Bangladesh spoke on behalf of the States members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the representative of the Sudan spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States (see [S/PV.8706 \(Resumption 1\)](#)). Non-Council members also submitted joint statements in accordance with the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, at the open videoconference held on 15 May in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#))”, the delegation of Chile submitted a statement on behalf of the Group of Like-Minded States on Targeted Sanctions; the representative of New Zealand submitted a statement on behalf of 24 countries that had served as elected members of the Council between 2011 and 2019; the delegation of Norway submitted a statement on behalf of the Nordic countries; and the representative of Switzerland submitted a statement on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group (see [S/2020/418](#)).

<sup>172</sup> See [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>173</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 22. See, for example, [S/PV.8699](#), [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 1\)](#), [S/PV.8699 \(Resumption 2\)](#), [S/PV.8706](#), [S/PV.8723](#) and [S/PV.8723 \(Resumption 1\)](#).

<sup>174</sup> See [S/PV.8723](#).

of the working methods agreed upon by Council members for the month of April 2020, briefers were asked by the presidency of the Council to share their statements in advance to allow for more interactive and focused interventions by Council members. Moreover, briefers were also encouraged to be succinct and to limit their remarks to seven minutes.<sup>178</sup>

In accordance with the note by the President dated 30 August 2017, as a general practice the speaking order for meetings of the Council is established by a draw. In addition, the President of the Council delivers his or her national statement last of all Council members.<sup>179</sup> However, in certain cases, the speaking order is established by the use of a sign-up sheet, and the President of the Council may make his or her national statement before the other members take the floor.<sup>180</sup> In certain cases, the President of the Council may adjust the list of speakers and inscribe first the delegation(s) responsible for the drafting process to allow them to make an introductory or explanatory presentation.<sup>181</sup> When an unscheduled or emergency meeting is convened, the President may adjust the list of speakers so that the delegation that requested the meeting can speak before other Council members in order to present the rationale for convening the meeting.<sup>182</sup> The President of the Council may also inscribe first the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies of the Council when they present their work, as was the case on several occasions during the period

under review.<sup>183</sup> In the letters from the President of the Council dated 2 April and 7 May 2020, it was established that, following general practice, the order of speakers of Council members in videoconferences during the COVID-19 pandemic would also be established by a draw.<sup>184</sup>

According to established practice, the list of speakers was adjusted according to protocol when high-level officials were representing Council members at a meeting.<sup>185</sup> In 2020, non-members of the Council having a direct interest in the matter under consideration spoke on occasion before Council members, consistent with prior practice and the note by the President dated 30 August 2017.<sup>186</sup>

Besides the use of videoconferences in lieu of in-person Council meetings, the Council continued to use videoconferencing technology to facilitate

<sup>178</sup> See [S/2020/273](#).

<sup>179</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, paras. 24–25.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* For example, at the 8743rd meeting, held on 11 March under the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa”, the representative of China (President of the Council) took the floor after the briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations and the Assistant Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the United Nations Development Programme Administrator, and delivered his national statement before the other Council members took the floor (see [S/PV.8743](#)).

<sup>181</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 26. For example, at the 8750th meeting, held on 28 July under the item entitled “The situation in the Central African Republic”, the representative of France, as penholder of resolution [2536 \(2020\)](#), which was adopted at the meeting, took the floor first after the vote to provide explanatory remarks (see [S/PV.8750](#)).

<sup>182</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 26. For example, at the open videoconference held on 20 May in connection with the item entitled “The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”, the representative of the Russian Federation, having requested an urgent meeting of the Council, delivered a statement before the other Council members (see [S/2020/435](#)).

<sup>183</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 27. For example, at the 8735th meeting, held on 27 February under the item entitled “The situation in Somalia”, the representative of Belgium (President of the Council) spoke before the other Council members and briefed the Council in his capacity as Chair of the Committee pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#) concerning Somalia (see [S/PV.8735](#)).

<sup>184</sup> [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

<sup>185</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, paras. 29–30. For example, at the open videoconference held on 21 April in connection with the item entitled “Protection of civilians in armed conflict”, the Dominican Republic (President of the Council), represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, took the floor after the briefers but before the other Council members (see [S/2020/340](#)); and at the open videoconference held on 6 August in connection with the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Indonesia (President of the Council), the Secretary of State to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Viet Nam took the floor after the briefers but before the other Council members (see [S/2020/791](#)). For more information on high-level meetings, see sect. II.A above.

<sup>186</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 33. For example, at the 8706th meeting, held on 21 January under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question,” the representative of Israel, who was invited under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, and the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine, who was invited in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and previous practice, both took the floor before Council members in accordance with established practice in connection with the item (see [S/PV.8706](#)). The practice of rule 37 invitees taking the floor ahead of Council members was also continued in connection with the items entitled “The situation in Afghanistan” (see, for example, [S/2020/891](#)) and “Security Council resolutions [1160 \(1998\)](#), [1199 \(1998\)](#), [1203 \(1998\)](#), [1239 \(1999\)](#) and [1244 \(1999\)](#)” (see, for example, [S/2020/339](#)).



participation at Council meetings, a practice that had become common in recent years.<sup>187</sup> In 2020, Council

members were briefed by speakers participating by videoconference in 31 out of 81 meetings of the Council (38.3 per cent).

<sup>187</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 60.

## VIII. Participation

### Note

Section VIII covers the practice of the Council concerning the extension of invitations to non-members of the Council to participate in meetings of the Council. Articles 31 and 32 of the Charter of the United Nations and rules 37 and 39 of the provisional rules of procedure describe circumstances in which invitations can be extended to non-members of the Council to participate, without a vote, when the Council so decides.

#### Article 31

*Any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council whenever the latter considers that the interests of that Member are specially affected.*

#### Article 32

*Any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council or any state which is not a Member of the United Nations, if it is a party to a dispute under consideration by the Security Council, shall be invited to participate, without vote, in the discussion relating to the dispute. The Security Council shall lay down such conditions as it deems just for the participation of a state which is not a Member of the United Nations.*

#### Rule 37

*Any Member of the United Nations which is not a member of the Security Council may be invited, as the result of a decision of the Security Council, to participate, without vote, in the discussion of any question brought before the Security Council when the Security Council considers that the interests of that Member are specially affected, or when a Member brings a matter to the attention of the Security Council in accordance with Article 35 (1) of the Charter.*

#### Rule 39

*The Security Council may invite members of the Secretariat or other persons, whom it considers competent for the purpose, to supply it with*

*information or to give other assistance in examining matters within its competence.*

During the period under review, the Council continued to invite non-members of the Council to participate in its meetings. As explained in section I above, however, participation of non-Council members was heavily restricted because of the technical limitations related to open videoconferences and the health and safety guidelines implemented for the holding of in-person meetings. This notwithstanding, the invitations were extended by the President of the Council at the beginning of or during Council meetings, either under the “relevant provisions” of the Charter without an explicit reference to a specific Article or rule of the provisional rules of procedure, or under rule 37 or rule 39. Specifically, Member States continued to be invited under rule 37, while representatives of the Secretariat, other United Nations organs, specialized agencies, funds and programmes, regional and other intergovernmental organizations, or other invitees, including representatives of non-governmental organizations and civil society, were invited under rule 39. While Member States requested invitations in letters addressed to the President of the Council, in most cases these were not circulated as documents of the Council. In accordance with the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, non-members of the Council were also invited to participate in videoconferences of the Council “within the principles of rules 37 and 39” if there were no objections from Council members.<sup>188</sup>

During the period under review, in accordance with the notes by the President dated 30 August 2017 and 27 December 2019 respectively, the Council invited the newly elected members to observe all meetings of the Council and informal consultations of the whole, including consultations on Council outcome documents from 1 October 2020, for the three months immediately preceding their term of membership. This included open and closed videoconferences.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>188</sup> See [S/2020/273](#). For more information on the working methods of the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic, see sect. I above.

<sup>189</sup> See [S/2017/507](#), annex, para. 140, and [S/2019/993](#).

The present section is divided into four subsections, namely: A. Invitations extended under rule 37; B. Invitations extended under rule 39; C. Invitations not expressly extended under rule 37 or rule 39; and D. Discussions relating to participation.

### A. Invitations extended under rule 37

In accordance with the relevant Articles of the Charter and the provisional rules of procedure, all States, whether Members of the United Nations or not, can be invited to participate in Council meetings when: (a) the interests of a Member State are “specially affected” (Article 31 of the Charter and rule 37); (b) a Member State or a non-Member State is a party to a dispute under consideration by the Council (Article 32 of the Charter); and (c) a Member State of the United Nations brings a matter to the attention of the Council in accordance with Article 35 (1) of the Charter (rule 37).<sup>190</sup> Non-Council members were also invited to participate in videoconferences of the Council initially in March 2020 when the interests of that Member were “specially affected” and there were “no objections from any Council member”, and subsequently from April 2020 “within the principles of rules 37 and 39” if there were no objections from Council members.<sup>191</sup>

Despite the limitations imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic on the participation of non-Council members, in 2020 there were no changes to the procedure for extending invitations to Member

States to participate in the meetings of the Council. There were also no instances when a request from a Member State to participate in a Council meeting was put to a vote at a meeting.

### B. Invitations extended under rule 39

In accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure, members of the Secretariat or other persons may be invited to supply the Council with information or give other assistance in examining matters within its competence.

Following previous practice, an invitation under rule 39 was extended to a representative of a Member State, on an exceptional basis, only if his or her participation was in a role other than that of representative of a State, for example, as Chair of one of its country-specific configurations of the Peacebuilding Commission.<sup>192</sup>

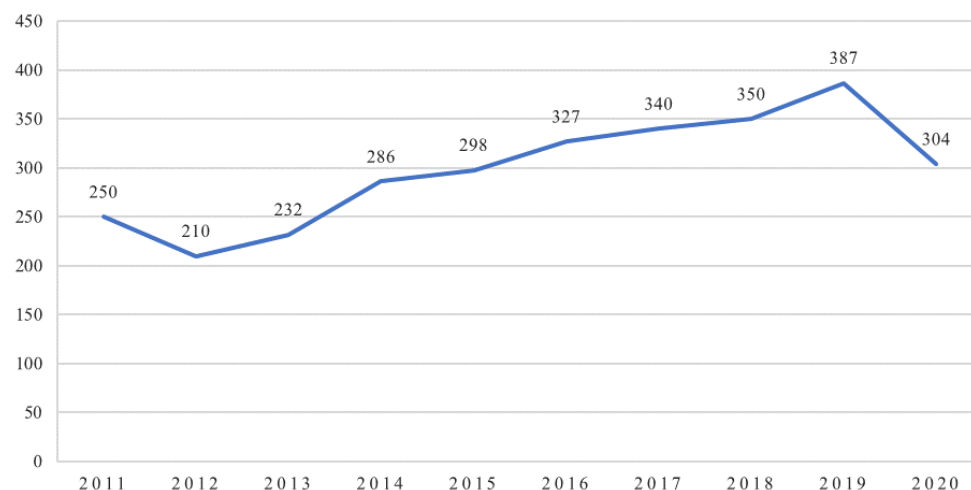
In 2020, a total of 304 invitations were extended under rule 39 in comparison with 387 in 2019 and 350 in 2018 (see figure IV).

<sup>192</sup> For example, at the 8724th meeting, held on 14 February under the item entitled “The situation in Guinea-Bissau”, the representative of Brazil was invited under rule 39 in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (see [S/PV.8724](#)); and at the 8728th meeting, held on 20 February under the item entitled “The situation in the Central African Republic”, the representative of Morocco was invited under rule 39 in his capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (see [S/PV.8728](#)).

<sup>190</sup> For more information on the referral of a dispute or situation to the Council by States, see sect. II.A above and part VI, sect. I.A.

<sup>191</sup> See [S/2020/253](#), [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

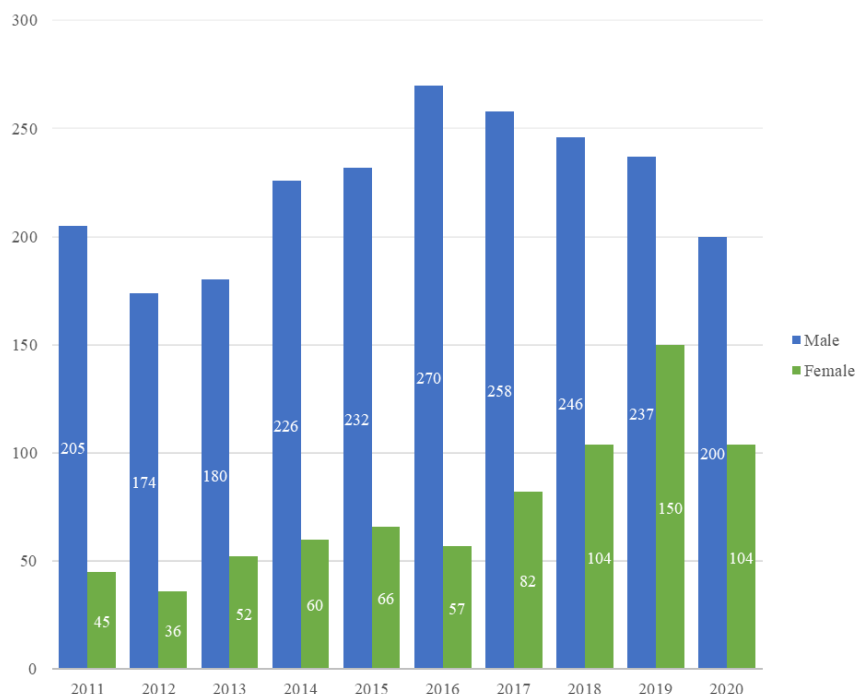
Figure IV  
Invitations under rule 39, 2011–2020



Of the 304 invitees under rule 39, 100 invitations were made in Council meetings, 195 in open videoconferences and 9 in closed videoconferences. Of the total number of invitees under rule 39, 200 were men and 104 were women. As shown in figure V, in recent years prior to 2020, the number of female

speakers invited to Council meetings under rule 39 had been increasing, but during the period under review, consistent with the overall decrease of rule 39 invitees compared with previous years, the percentage of women invited under rule 39 decreased from 38.7 per cent in 2019 to 34.2 per cent in 2020.

Figure V  
Invitations under rule 39, 2011–2020



For the purposes of this part of the *Repertoire*, invitations extended under rule 39 are classified according to four main categories, namely:<sup>193</sup> (a) officials of the United Nations system;<sup>194</sup> (b) invitees from international organizations other than the United Nations;<sup>195</sup> (c) officials representing

regional intergovernmental organizations;<sup>196</sup> and (d) representatives of other entities such as non-governmental and civil society organizations.<sup>197</sup> During the period under review, invitations under rule 39 were most often extended to officials of the United Nations system and representatives of other entities, such as regional organizations. Non-governmental organizations and civil society were invited less frequently, as shown in figure VI.

<sup>193</sup> In previous supplements, separate categories were used for invitees of the Secretariat and Council subsidiary bodies and those representing other United Nations organs, subsidiary bodies or agencies. For the sake of simplicity, these two categories are now subsumed under the category “United Nations system”.

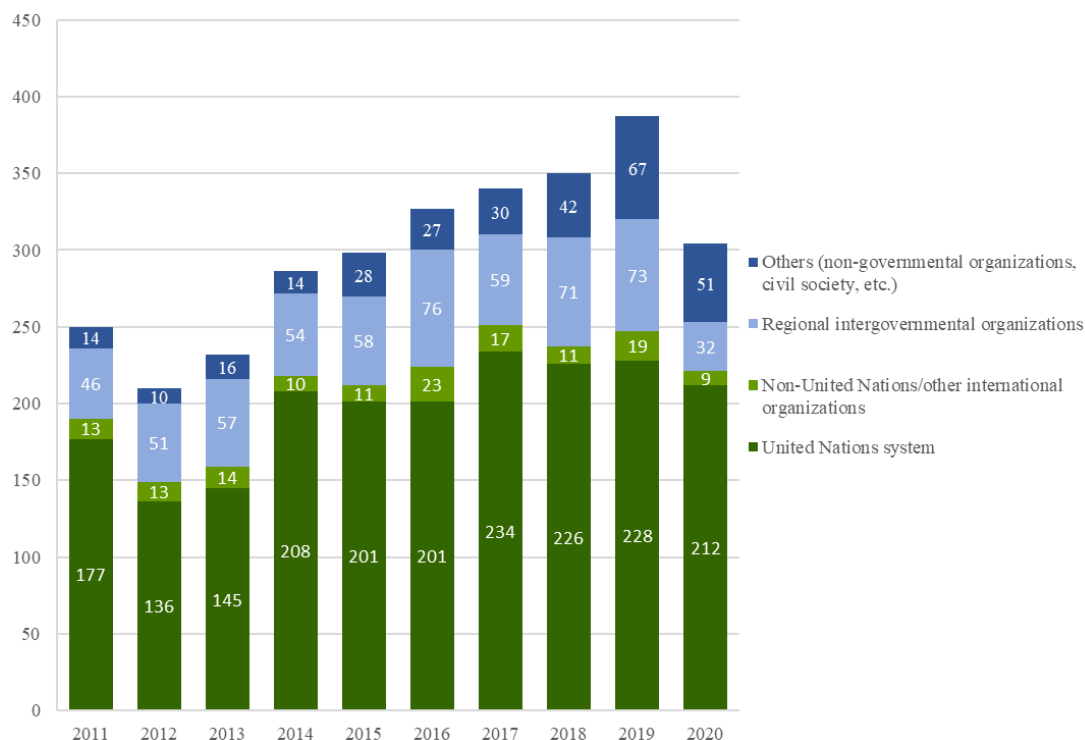
<sup>194</sup> For example, at the 8706th meeting, held on 21 January, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs was invited under rule 39 (see [S/PV.8706](#)).

<sup>195</sup> For example, at the 8723rd meeting, held on 13 February, the Permanent Observer and Head of Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations was invited under rule 39 (see [S/PV.8723](#)).

<sup>196</sup> For example, at the 8771st meeting, held on 19 October, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union was invited under rule 39 (see [S/PV.8771](#)).

<sup>197</sup> For example, at the 8753rd meeting, held on 28 July, the Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation was invited under rule 39 (see [S/PV.8753](#)).

Figure VI  
Breakdown of rule 39 invitations by category, 2011–2020



### C. Invitations not expressly extended under rule 37 or rule 39

During the period under review, the Council extended several invitations not expressly under rule 37 or rule 39 (see table 14).

Invitations to representatives of the Holy See and the State of Palestine to participate in meetings of the Council were routinely extended “in accordance with the provisional rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard”, without specification of any rules.

Table 14  
Invitations not expressly extended under rule 37 or rule 39, 2020

Invitee	Meeting or videoconference record and date	Item
State of Palestine	<a href="#">S/PV.8706</a> , 21 January 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question
	<a href="#">S/PV.8717</a> , 11 February 2020	
	<a href="#">S/2020/341</a> , 23 April 2020	
	<a href="#">S/2020/596</a> , 24 June 2020	
	<a href="#">S/2020/736</a> , 21 July 2020	
	<a href="#">S/2020/1055</a> , 26 October 2020	
	<a href="#">S/PV.8699</a> , 9 January 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security
Holy See	<a href="#">S/PV.8706</a> , 21 January 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

## D. Discussions relating to participation

During the period under review, when non-members of the Council were invited to participate in a meeting, Council members generally spoke before Member States invited under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure and before those not expressly invited under any rule, except on some occasions when parties directly involved in the matter under consideration took the floor before Council members.<sup>198</sup> The practice of the Council with regard to invitees under rule 39 was less consistent and the order of speakers depended on whether or not they were participating in the meeting or videoconference to brief the Council.

In 2020, matters concerning participation in Council meetings and videoconferences were raised on several occasions. At an open videoconference<sup>199</sup> held on 21 October in connection with the item entitled “Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)”, the representative of Belgium expressed regret that it was not possible for the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkan regional issues to give a complementary briefing to the one provided by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Kosovo and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo. Echoing that view, the representative of France stated that the dispute between Serbia and Kosovo was a European security issue, which fully justified the role of the European Union in that matter. The representative of Germany considered that any picture of the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia remained incomplete without the briefing by the European Union Special Representative and expressed regret that the briefing had been blocked by the President of the Council.

At an open videoconference<sup>200</sup> held on 27 April in connection with the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security”, focusing on youth and peace and security, the delegation of Norway, on behalf of the Nordic countries, welcomed the participation of the young civil society briefers. The delegation underlined in its statement the importance of the voices of civil society and youth-led organizations, which continued to bring vital input into the work and considerations of the Council, even amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The delegation of Tunisia

and the representative of Switzerland further called on the Council to strengthen the role of youth and integrate a youth and peace and security analysis into the Council’s items by inviting more young briefers.

During an open videoconference<sup>201</sup> held on 15 December in connection with the item entitled “Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan”, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that it was a “great shame” that the representative of South Sudan did not make a request under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure to be in the Council as it discussed the plight facing millions of his compatriots.

Participation in Council meetings was discussed in more detail during the annual open debate on the working methods of the Council, an open videoconference held in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of 30 August 2017 (S/2017/507)” (see case 5) and during the 8764th meeting of the Council, held under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” (see case 6).

### Case 5

#### Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

On 15 May, at the initiative of Estonia, which held the presidency for the month, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, whose representative held the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions,<sup>202</sup> Council members held an open videoconference on the working methods of the Council in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)”, focusing on the issue of ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Council.<sup>203</sup>

In their statements, Council members and other delegations discussed the importance of transparency and inclusivity in the work of the Council, in particular through the participation of the wider United Nations membership, representatives of civil society and other stakeholders in Council meetings. In her statement, the representative of the Philippines noted that the increased participation of non-Council members sent the important message that the Council recognized

<sup>198</sup> For more information on the order of speaking see sect. VII above.

<sup>199</sup> See S/2020/1040.

<sup>200</sup> See S/2020/346.

<sup>201</sup> See S/2020/1237.

<sup>202</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/374).

<sup>203</sup> See S/2020/418. For more information on the videoconference, see case 1 above.

their contribution and promoted inclusiveness, which put unilateralism “in check”. The representative of Cuba stated that any State directly involved or particularly affected by a matter under discussion should be allowed to participate in deliberations and decision-making of the Council on matters directly concerning it, as established by Article 31 of the Charter. The delegation of Cyprus questioned the rationale for host countries not being able to participate in Council meetings with troop-contributing countries. The delegation of Guatemala stated that interactions with troop-contributing countries clearly increased the capacity of the Council to make appropriate, effective and timely decisions to fulfil its responsibilities.

Several delegations stressed the importance of civil society participation in Council activities to provide first-hand experience on the issues on the Council’s agenda and inform Council decision-making.<sup>204</sup> Some delegations specifically underlined the need for more women civil society briefers in Council meetings.<sup>205</sup> The delegation of Canada maintained that women should not be relegated to participating in informal briefings and side events. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that engaging with a diverse set of briefers was an important element of transparency and that the Council needed to do better with handling the risk of reprisals against civil society members who participated in Council meetings.

Both members and non-members of the Council acknowledged the importance of open debates in enhancing inclusivity and transparency in the work of the Council.<sup>206</sup> Speaking on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, the representative of Switzerland recalled that the *raison d’être* of open debates was to give the opportunity to the wider membership to inform Council deliberations rather than to merely accompany the adoption of pre-defined Council outcomes. Encouraging the full and active participation of all interested Member States in the context of the working

methods adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic, the delegation of Canada and the representative of El Salvador proposed that open debates be accessible in all official languages.

The impact of the working methods of the Council adopted during the COVID-19 pandemic on the participation of briefers and non-Council members was addressed in several statements. A number of delegations welcomed the efforts made by Council members to facilitate the participation of non-Council members in open videoconferences.<sup>207</sup> The representative of Austria and the delegation of Ireland noted the positive aspects of the use of videoconference technology, in particular for speakers who would not otherwise be able to travel to New York. The delegation of Norway stated that the practice of inviting civil society and United Nations briefers should be maintained throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, especially since the situation in relevant countries could change profoundly and rapidly. The representative of Liechtenstein considered that the use of Arria-formula videoconferences should be opened up for increased participation by briefers from civil society, in particular those who could have difficulty in accessing the Council during normal times, including women, young people and persons with disabilities.

Some delegations highlighted the obstacles to the participation of non-Council members in Council videoconferences. The representative of Austria noted that the participation of the wider membership in open videoconferences, in accordance with rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, was possible only in written form, thus compounding the lack of interaction between Council members and the wider membership. The delegation of Ireland noted that it was still not possible for non-members of the Council to deliver oral statements at videoconferences and welcomed the presidency’s clarification that if it became technically feasible, non-members of the Council could be able to do so. The representative of Cuba added that the new working methods were not sufficient, because they did not allow for the participation of a State non-member of the Council in a closed videoconference when a topic affecting it specifically was being discussed, as established by rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. The delegation of Brazil stated that it was paramount to allow non-members of the Council to participate in Council discussions whenever their interests were especially affected. The

<sup>204</sup> United Kingdom, Viet Nam (on behalf of the 10 elected members of the Council), Australia, Austria, Canada, El Salvador, Italy, New Zealand (on behalf of 24 countries that had served as elected Council members between 2011 and 2019), Liechtenstein, Malta, Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Philippines and Turkey.

<sup>205</sup> Australia, Canada, Italy, New Zealand (on behalf of 24 countries that had served as elected Council members between 2011 and 2019) and Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries).

<sup>206</sup> Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Bahrain, El Salvador, Guatemala and Morocco.

<sup>207</sup> Australia, Ireland, Republic of Korea and Switzerland (on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group).



representative of El Salvador commended the efforts made to keep the open debate format active despite the challenges posed by the pandemic and expressed hope that participation could be extended in the short-term beyond the inclusion of written statements as documents of the Council and that participants could have their statements heard in all the United Nations official languages. She considered that the practice could be carried over to other Council meetings that took place in more private environments, such as informal interactive dialogues. Speaking on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, the representative of Switzerland expressed concern that civil society representatives, in particular women, had had little opportunity to brief the Council since the beginning of the practice of holding virtual meetings.

### Case 6

#### The situation in the Middle East

At its 8764th meeting,<sup>208</sup> held on 5 October under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, the Council discussed the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. The representative of the United Kingdom, together with the representatives of Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany and the United States, raised an objection to the proposal by the Russian Federation, which held the presidency for the month, to invite José Bustani, former Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), to participate in the meeting under rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure. The representative of the United Kingdom noted that the purpose of the meeting was for the Council to review the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) and the decision of 27 September 2013 by the Executive Council of OPCW. Agreeing that the presidency of the Council should have the space to propose briefers, he stated that they must be relevant to and knowledgeable of the topic under discussion. According to the representative of the United Kingdom, given Mr. Bustani’s departure from OPCW many years before it considered the Syrian chemical weapons file, he was not in a position to provide relevant knowledge or information on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013).

The President of the Council responded that in the history of the Council, a briever, in particular one proposed by the presidency of the Council, was rarely rejected and that even though certain briefers proposed by presidencies had many issues, the competence of

those briefers had not been challenged. The representative of China stated that Mr. Bustani was well suited to be a briever and would bring unique value to the meeting. Moreover, at previous Council meetings, Council members did not try to block or raise objections to invitations under rule 39 even though some briefers had not been nearly as professional or representative as Mr. Bustani.

While agreeing about the need to hold a procedural vote to determine whether the Council could extend an invitation to Mr. Bustani under rule 39, Council members expressed divergent views on the terms of the motion. The President of the Council proposed that Council vote on a motion to oppose Mr. Bustani briefing the meeting. By contrast, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that the Council should vote on a motion to support the proposal of the Russian Federation to invite the briever.

The President of the Council noted that rule 39 said nothing about the procedure as to whom the Council invited or how, or on which of the questions should be dealt with first. The representative of France stated that rule 39 was “absolutely crystal clear” and that if one wished to invite an additional briever without agreement, the Council would vote on that proposal, which needed nine votes to be accepted, and recalled that all permanent members were in agreement on that.

Underlining his authority as the President of the Council to read the rules of procedure and lead the proceedings in such a way as was deemed necessary, the President of the Council put to the vote the question of whether the Council agreed to invite Mr. Bustani to provide a briefing. The Council failed to adopt the proposal to extend the invitation to Mr. Bustani under rule 39 for lack of the required number of affirmative votes.<sup>209</sup>

Having adopted the provisional agenda for the meeting, the Council proceeded with its consideration of the item on the agenda. During the subsequent discussion, the President, speaking in his national capacity, said that he would read out the statement of Mr. Bustani, which had been “blocked”, as part of his own statement as the representative of the Russian Federation.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>209</sup> The proposal received three votes in favour (China, Russian Federation, South Africa), six against (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States) and six abstentions (Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Viet Nam).

<sup>210</sup> See [S/PV.8764](#).

<sup>208</sup> See [S/PV.8764](#).



## IX. Decision-making and voting

### Note

Section IX covers the practice of the Council with regard to decision-making, including voting. Article 27 of the Charter and rule 40 of the provisional rules of procedure govern the voting in the Council. They provide that decisions on procedural matters require an affirmative vote of 9 of the 15 Council members, while decisions on substantive matters require an affirmative vote of nine Council members, including all of the permanent members.

This section also covers rules 31, 32, 34 to 36 and 38 of the provisional rules of procedure, which govern the conduct of business with regard to voting on draft resolutions, amendments and substantive motions.

### Article 27

1. *Each member of the Security Council shall have one vote.*

2. *Decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members.*

3. *Decisions of the Security Council on all other matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine members including the concurring votes of the permanent members; provided that, in decisions under Chapter VI, and under paragraph 3 of Article 52, a party to a dispute shall abstain from voting.*

### Rule 31

*Proposed resolutions, amendments and substantive motions shall normally be placed before the representatives in writing.*

### Rule 32

*Principal motions and draft resolutions shall have precedence in the order of their submission.*

*Parts of a motion or of a draft resolution shall be voted on separately at the request of any representative, unless the original mover objects.*

### Rule 34

*It shall not be necessary for any motion or draft resolution proposed by a representative on the Security Council to be seconded before being put to a vote.*

### Rule 35

*A motion or draft resolution can at any time be withdrawn so long as no vote has been taken with respect to it.*

*If the motion or draft resolution has been seconded, the representative on the Security Council who has seconded it may require that it be put to the vote as his motion or draft resolution with the same right of precedence as if the original mover had not withdrawn it.*

### Rule 36

*If two or more amendments to a motion or draft resolution are proposed, the President shall rule on the order in which they are to be voted upon. Ordinarily, the Security Council shall first vote on the amendment furthest removed in substance from the original proposal and then on the amendment next furthest removed until all amendments have been put to the vote, but when an amendment adds to or deletes from the text of a motion or draft resolution, that amendment shall be voted on first.*

### Rule 38

*Any Member of the United Nations invited in accordance with the preceding rule, or in application of Article 32 of the Charter, to participate in the discussions of the Security Council may submit proposals and draft resolutions. These proposals and draft resolutions may be put to a vote only at the request of a representative on the Security Council.*

### Rule 40

*Voting in the Security Council shall be in accordance with the relevant Articles of the Charter and of the Statute of the International Court of Justice.*

This section comprises five subsections, namely: A. Decisions of the Council; B. Penholdership and sponsorship in accordance with rule 38; C. Decision-making by voting; D. Decision-making without a vote; and E. Discussions concerning the decision-making process.

In 2020, rule 31 of the provisional rules of procedure was routinely applied in Council meetings, in particular in connection with the written voting procedure agreed upon to allow for voting despite the inability of Council members to meet in person during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were several instances of submission of competing draft resolutions, which

were voted on in their order of submission pursuant to rule 32, as described in subsection A below. That notwithstanding, there were no instances of explicit invocation of rules 32 or 34.

Rule 36 was explicitly referred to once during the period under review. At the 8700th meeting, held on 10 January under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, the President of the Council invoked rule 36 and put to a vote an oral amendment submitted by the Russian Federation to a draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany. The proposed amendment failed to obtain the required number of votes and the Council proceeded to vote on and adopt the draft resolution as originally proposed.<sup>211</sup>

## A. Decisions of the Council

At its meetings during the period under review, the Council continued to adopt resolutions and issue statements by the President, in addition to making procedural decisions. Decisions of the Council also took the form of notes by the President and letters from the President, which were not adopted at meetings and were issued as documents of the Council. In 2020, the Council also adopted resolutions and presidential statements in accordance with the written procedures

established in the letters dated 27 March and 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Council.<sup>212</sup>

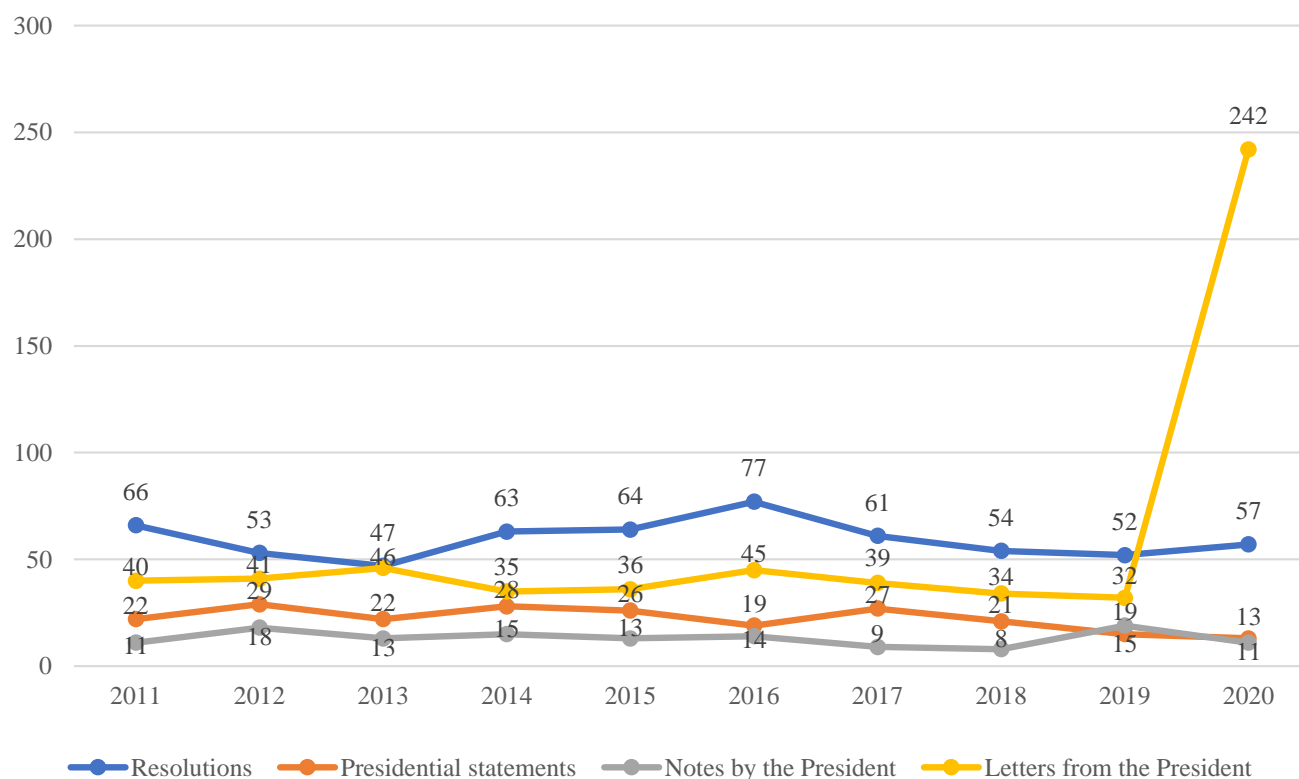
In 2020, the Council adopted 57 resolutions and issued 13 presidential statements. Of the 57 resolutions adopted, 23 (40.4 per cent) were adopted in a meeting of the Council and 34 (59.6 per cent) were adopted through the written procedure agreed upon to be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the 13 presidential statements, nine (69.2 per cent) were issued at a meeting of the Council and four (30.8 per cent) were issued through the agreed written procedure. In addition, the Council issued 11 notes by the President and 242 letters from the President. The very significant increase in letters from the President in 2020 compared with previous years was due to the working methods agreed to and developed during the COVID-19 pandemic to: (a) record in a letter from the President the specific working methods applicable each month; (b) compile in letters from the President the statements and interventions made by briefers, Council members and non-Council members during open videoconferences; and (c) record the various steps of the written procedure for the adoption of resolutions agreed upon by Council members during the COVID-19 pandemic. Out of the 242 letters from the President, 118 (48.8 per cent) were letters compiling the interventions of the briefers and of all Council and non-Council members who requested the inclusion of their statements in the document, and 81 (33.5 per cent) were letters recording the various steps of the written procedure for the adoption of resolutions.<sup>213</sup> Figure VII shows the total number of resolutions adopted and presidential statements, notes and letters from the President issued during the past decade (2011–2020).

<sup>211</sup> See [S/PV.8700](#). The result of the voting on the proposed oral amendment was as follows: *for*: China, Russian Federation, Viet Nam; *against*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States; *abstaining*: Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia. The result of the voting on the draft resolution ([S/2020/24](#)) was as follows: *for*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, Viet Nam; *abstaining*: China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States. The draft resolution was adopted as resolution [2504 \(2020\)](#). During the 8700th meeting, the Russian Federation withdrew its draft resolution contained in document [S/2020/25](#) (see [S/PV.8700](#)). For more information on the draft resolution, see part I, sect. 20.

<sup>212</sup> See [S/2020/253](#) and [S/2020/372](#). For more information on the written procedures for the adoption of resolutions and presidential statements, see sect. I.D above.

<sup>213</sup> See [S/2020/253](#), [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

Figure VII  
Resolutions adopted and statements and notes by and letters from the President issued, 2011–2020



#### *Multiple decisions in one meeting*

During 2020, the Council continued the standard practice of adopting a single decision in a meeting and there was no instance where more than one draft resolution was put to a vote at a single meeting. This notwithstanding, as described in section I.D above, amendments to a draft resolution were voted on concurrently in connection with the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”. In accordance with the written voting procedure, within 12 hours of the conclusion of the voting on a draft resolution, the President convened a videoconference to announce the outcome of the vote.<sup>214</sup> In several instances, announcements of the outcome of the vote for more than one decision were made in a single videoconference.

### **B. Penholdership and sponsorship in accordance with rule 38**

A draft resolution may be submitted by any member of the Council. The note by the President dated 30 August 2017 provides that the members of the Council support, where appropriate, the informal arrangement whereby one or more Council members, as

penholder(s), initiate and chair the informal drafting process. In accordance with the note, any member of the Council may be a penholder and more than one Council member may act as co-penholders, when it is deemed to add value, taking into account as appropriate the expertise and/or contributions of Council members on the subject. In the note, Council members reaffirmed that all members of the Council should be allowed to participate fully in the preparation of, inter alia, resolutions, presidential statements and press statements of the Council and the drafting of all documents such as resolutions and presidential statements and press statements should be carried out in an inclusive manner that would allow participation of all members of the Council. The members of the Council also encouraged the penholder or co-penholders, depending on the subject as well as the urgency of the situation on the ground, to provide reasonably sufficient time for consideration by all Council members when draft resolutions, presidential statements and press statements of the Council are placed under a silence procedure.<sup>215</sup>

Pursuant to rule 38 of the provisional rules of procedure, any Member of the United Nations invited in accordance with rule 37 or in application of Article 32 of the Charter to participate in the discussions of the

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

<sup>215</sup> S/2017/507, annex, paras. 78–80 and 82.

Council may also submit proposals and draft resolutions, but proposals and draft resolutions may be put to a vote only at the request of a Council member. The Member States that submit a draft resolution become sponsors of the draft resolution. A draft resolution is described as a presidential text if all the Council members agree to be co-sponsors. In 2020, one presidential text was submitted, compared with none in 2019.<sup>216</sup> At an open videoconference<sup>217</sup> convened on

29 June in connection with the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa”, focusing on the question of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the representative of Egypt submitted a draft resolution under rule 38 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council for deliberation by the Council that was “consistent with the outcomes of the African Union Bureau meeting”.<sup>218</sup>

During the period under review, the Council considered a total of 64 draft resolutions, four of which were sponsored by non-members of the Council as shown in table 15.

<sup>216</sup> Resolution 2538 (2020). For more information on past practice concerning presidential texts, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2016–2017 to 2019*.

<sup>217</sup> See S/2020/636.

<sup>218</sup> See S/2020/617.

Table 15

**Draft resolutions co-sponsored by non-members of the Council, 2020**

<i>Draft resolution</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Meeting or videoconference record and date</i>	<i>Resolution</i>	<i>Council member sponsors</i>	<i>Non-Council member co-sponsors</i>
S/2020/240	United Nations peacekeeping operations	S/2020/249 30 March 2020	Resolution 2518 (2020)	8 Council members (China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, South Africa, Tunisia, Viet Nam)	36 Member States <sup>a</sup>
S/2020/680	Maintenance of international peace and security	S/PV.8748 14 July 2020	Resolution 2535 (2020)	13 Council members (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	71 Member States <sup>b</sup>
S/2020/838	United Nations peacekeeping operations	S/2020/851 28 August 2020	Resolution 2538 (2020)	All Council members	82 Member States <sup>c</sup>
S/2020/957	Maintenance of international peace and security	S/PV.8763 2 October 2020	Resolution 2546 (2020)	4 Council members (Belgium, Estonia, Germany, France)	23 Member States <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Greece, Guinea, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Republic of Tanzania and Uruguay.

<sup>b</sup> Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

<sup>c</sup> Albania, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.

<sup>d</sup> Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

## C. Decision-making by voting

According to Article 27 (2) and (3) of the Charter, decisions of the Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of nine Council members. On all other matters, that is, substantive or non-procedural matters, an affirmative vote of nine Council members is required, including the concurring votes of the permanent members.

The result of a vote in the Council often does not in itself indicate whether the Council considers the matter voted upon to be procedural or substantive. For example, whether a vote is procedural or not cannot be determined when a proposal is: (a) adopted by a unanimous vote; (b) adopted by an affirmative vote of all permanent members; or (c) not adopted having failed to obtain the nine affirmative votes required. When a proposal is adopted having obtained nine or more affirmative votes with one or more permanent members casting a negative vote, that indicates that the

vote is considered procedural. Conversely, if the proposal is not adopted, the matter voted upon is considered to be substantive. On certain occasions, in its early years, the Council found it necessary to decide, by vote, the question of whether the matter under consideration was procedural within the meaning of Article 27 (2). That procedure is known as the “preliminary question”, after the language used in the San Francisco Statement on Voting Procedure. In recent years, however, including during the period under review, there have been no instances of the Council deciding to examine the preliminary question. Furthermore, procedural motions, such as the adoption of the agenda, the extension of invitations to participate in meetings and the suspension or adjournment of a meeting, have generally been decided upon by the Council without a vote. When such motions were voted upon, the vote was considered procedural. In 2020, the Council voted on procedural matters on one occasion (see table 16).

Table 16

### Case in which the vote indicated the procedural character of the matter, 2020

<i>Item</i>	<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Subject of proposal</i>	<i>Vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>	<i>Permanent members casting a negative vote</i>
The situation in the Middle East	<a href="#">S/PV.8764</a> 5 October 2020	Invitation to participate in the proceeding under rule 39 <sup>a</sup>	3-6-6	France, United Kingdom, United States

<sup>a</sup> For more information on the adoption of the agenda, see sections III.A and III.C above.

### *Adoption of resolutions*

During the period under review, the majority of resolutions adopted by the Council (44 out of 57, or

77.2 per cent) were adopted unanimously. A total of 13 resolutions were adopted without a unanimous vote (see table 17).

Table 17

### Resolutions adopted without a unanimous vote, 2020

<i>Resolution</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Meeting or videoconference record and date</i>	<i>Votes in favour</i>	<i>Votes against</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>
<a href="#">2504 (2020)</a>	The situation in the Middle East <sup>a</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8700</a> 10 January 2020	11 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, Viet Nam)	None	4 (China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States)
<a href="#">2507 (2020)</a>	The situation in the Central African Republic <sup>b</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8712</a> 31 January 2020	13 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	2 (China, Russian Federation)

<i>Resolution</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Meeting or videoconference record and date</i>	<i>Votes in favour</i>	<i>Votes against</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>
2509 (2020)	The situation in Libya <sup>c</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8719</a> 11 February 2020	14 (Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	1 (Russian Federation)
2510 (2020)	The situation in Libya <sup>c</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8722</a> 12 February 2020	14 (Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	1 (Russian Federation)
2511 (2020)	The situation in the Middle East <sup>a</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8732</a> 25 February 2020	13 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	2 (China, Russian Federation)
2521 (2020)	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan <sup>d</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/462</a> <a href="#">S/2020/469</a> 29 May 2020	12 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	3 (China, Russian Federation, South Africa)
2529 (2020)	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals <sup>e</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/590</a> <a href="#">S/2020/602</a> 25 June 2020	14 (Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	1 (Russian Federation)
2533 (2020)	The situation in the Middle East <sup>a</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/698</a> <a href="#">S/2020/702</a> 11 July 2020	12 (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	3 (China, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation)
2542 (2020)	The situation in Libya <sup>c</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8758</a> 15 September 2020	13 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	2 (China, Russian Federation)
2547 (2020)	The question concerning Haiti <sup>f</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8768</a> 15 October 2020	13 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	2 (China, Russian Federation)
2548 (2020)	The situation concerning Western Sahara <sup>g</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/1063</a> <a href="#">S/2020/1075</a> 30 October 2020	13 (Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	2 (Russian Federation, South Africa)
2551 (2020)	The situation in Somalia <sup>h</sup>	<a href="#">S/PV.8775</a> 12 November 2020	13 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	2 (China, Russian Federation)

<i>Resolution</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Meeting or videoconference record and date</i>	<i>Votes in favour</i>	<i>Votes against</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>
2556 (2020)	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo <sup>i</sup>	S/2020/1253 S/2020/1265 18 December 2020	14 (Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	None	1 (Russian Federation)

<sup>a</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 20.

<sup>b</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 5.

<sup>c</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 11.

<sup>d</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 8.

<sup>e</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 24.

<sup>f</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 13.

<sup>g</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 1.

<sup>h</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 2.

<sup>i</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 4.

### *Draft resolutions not adopted*

In accordance with Article 27 (3) of the Charter, a draft resolution on non-procedural matters is not adopted when it fails to obtain the nine affirmative votes required, or when a negative vote is cast by a permanent member. During the period under review,

there were four instances in which a draft resolution was not adopted because it failed to obtain the nine affirmative votes required and three instances when a draft resolution was not adopted owing to a negative vote cast by a permanent member (see table 18).

Table 18

### **Draft resolutions not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member or for lack of the requisite number of votes, 2020**

<i>Draft resolution</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Votes in favour</i>	<i>Votes against</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>
S/2020/654	The situation in the Middle East <sup>a</sup>	S/2020/661 7 July 2020	13 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	2 (China, Russian Federation)	None
S/2020/658	The situation in the Middle East <sup>a</sup>	S/2020/671 8 July 2020	4 (China, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam)	7 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States)	4 (Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia)
S/2020/667	The situation in the Middle East <sup>a</sup>	S/2020/693 10 July 2020	13 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam)	2 (China and Russian Federation)	None



<i>Draft resolution</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Votes in favour</i>	<i>Votes against</i>	<i>Abstentions</i>
<a href="#">S/2020/683</a>	The situation in the Middle East <sup>a</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/694</a> 10 July 2020	4 (China, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam)	7 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States)	4 (Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia)
<a href="#">S/2020/797</a>	Non-proliferation <sup>b</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/805</a> 14 August 2020	2 (Dominican Republic, United States)	2 (China, Russian Federation)	11 (Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Viet Nam)
<a href="#">S/2020/852</a>	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts <sup>c</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/870</a> 31 August 2020	14 (Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Viet Nam)	1 (United States)	None
<a href="#">S/2020/1054</a>	Women and peace and security <sup>d</sup>	<a href="#">S/2020/1076</a> 30 October 2020	5 (China, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam)	None	10 (Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States)

<sup>a</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 20.

<sup>b</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 32.A.

<sup>c</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 29.

<sup>d</sup> For more information on the discussion, see part I, sect. 28.

## D. Decision-making without a vote

A procedural or substantive motion may be adopted in the Council without a vote or by consensus. In 2020, there were no instances of a resolution being adopted without a vote. A total of 23 resolutions were adopted by a show of hands and 34 resolutions were adopted in accordance with the written procedure agreed upon by Council members during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>219</sup>

Statements by the President on behalf of the Council continued to be adopted by consensus. A total of 13 statements by the President were adopted during the period under review.<sup>220</sup> In line with past practice, 13 of the presidential statements were adopted in meetings of the Council, while 4 presidential statements were adopted in accordance with the written no-objection procedure established in the letters from the President dated 2 April and 7 May 2020 and were

<sup>219</sup> See [S/2020/253](#). For more information on the written procedure for the adoption of resolutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, see sect. I.D above.

<sup>220</sup> For a complete list of presidential statements adopted during the period under review, see part I, chap. II, of the report of the Council to the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly ([A/75/2](#)).

subsequently read out by the President of the Council during open videoconferences.<sup>221</sup>

Following past practice, during the period under review, notes and letters by the President of the Council were adopted by consensus and issued as documents of the Council. In 2020, the Council issued 11 notes and 242 letters by the President.<sup>222</sup> As indicated in subsection A above, the majority of the letters from the President (199 out of 242, or 82.2 per cent) were used to circulate compilations of interventions in open videoconferences and the initiation and outcome of the written voting procedure for the adoption of resolutions.

Notes and letters by the President are rarely adopted during Council meetings. During the period under review, one note by the President, namely, the note concerning the adoption of the draft annual report of the Council to the General Assembly for the period from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019, was adopted during a meeting of the Council, in line with past practice.<sup>223</sup>

## E. Discussions concerning the decision-making process

During the period under review, in a letter dated 30 March 2020 addressed to the President of the Council, the representative of Switzerland, writing on behalf of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, welcomed the active discussions within the Council and proactive efforts, including by the Council's presidency, to adapt the working methods to the extraordinary circumstances, notably with a procedure for voting on draft resolutions in the absence of a physical meeting.<sup>224</sup>

Furthermore, Council members and the wider membership discussed issues pertaining to the decision-making of the Council in connection with the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the

President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)" (see case 7) and under the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security" (see case 8).

### Case 7

#### Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)

On 15 May, at the initiative of Estonia, which held the presidency for the month, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, whose representative held the Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions,<sup>225</sup> Council members held an open videoconference<sup>226</sup> in connection with the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)", focusing on the issue of ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Council. In their statements, Council members and other delegations focused on the need for transparency and inclusivity in the decision-making process of the Council, the use of the veto and the written procedure for the adoption of resolutions established during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Several members and non-members of the Council highlighted the importance of transparency and inclusivity in the Council's decision-making, particularly vis-à-vis the wider membership of the United Nations. The delegation of Argentina stated that, without affecting the effectiveness of decision-making, the Council could and must be more transparent and democratic in its relationship with the wider membership. The delegation of Australia highlighted the importance of transparency in improving decision-making and perhaps even implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Council's work. The representative of the Plurinational State of Bolivia expressed the view that the participation of Member States in the decision-making process of the Council remained low owing to the Council's working methods and the lack of transparency under the pretence of effective, efficient and rapid decision-making. Citing Article 31 of the Charter, the delegation of Brazil and the representative of Cuba stressed the need to include all States involved in the work of the Council, as appropriate. The representative of Lebanon underlined that the Council could improve the efficiency of its work by enhancing meaningful communication and the involvement of concerned countries in the decision-making process,

<sup>221</sup> See S/2020/273 and S/2020/372.

<sup>222</sup> For a complete list of notes by the President of the Council issued in 2020, see part I, chap. XIII, of the report of the Council to the seventy-fifth session of the Assembly (A/75/2) and [www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/notes-president-2020](http://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/notes-president-2020). For a complete list of letters from the President of the Council issued in 2020, see part I, chap. III, of the report of the Council to the Assembly (A/75/2) and [www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/letters-exchanged-between-secretary-general-and-president-security-council-2020](http://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/letters-exchanged-between-secretary-general-and-president-security-council-2020).

<sup>223</sup> S/2020/666, adopted at the 8746th meeting (see S/PV.8746). For more information, see part IV, sect. I.F.

<sup>224</sup> See S/2020/252.

<sup>225</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/374).

<sup>226</sup> See S/2020/418. For more information on the videoconference, see case 1 above.

while the representative of Costa Rica stressed that co-penholdership, consultations and information-sharing would improve decision-making and make for a democratic Council. The delegation of Egypt stated that draft resolutions and presidential statements should be shared with the wider membership to give them the opportunity to share their views and proposals. The representative of the Philippines emphasized the need for greater participation of regional organizations in the Council's decision-making processes. While noting the importance of transparency and inclusivity in the decision-making process of the Council, the representative of Japan recalled that the prime objective was to enhance the Council's capacity to take the best action in the most efficient and timely manner to maintain and restore international peace and security.

Multiple delegations stressed the need for burden-sharing and an equitable distribution of responsibility for the drafting of Council decisions and outcomes among all Council members.<sup>227</sup> The representative of the Russian Federation noted that three permanent members of the Council remained the sole penholders on most of the country-specific dossiers on the Council's agenda and expressed willingness to support all Council members to adopt the draft presidential note on penholdership submitted by his delegation. The delegation of Brazil underlined that a fair and adequate distribution of penholderships, as well as co-penholderships, among permanent and elected members of the Council, would help to foster greater levels of transparency and accountability. The delegation of the United Arab Emirates indicated that achieving a more balanced division of labour for penholdership was not simply a question of inclusiveness, but could contribute to a more effective Council. The delegation of Ireland noted that burden-sharing and equitable distribution of work could be done through a transparent process for the allocation of penholderships that took the expertise of elected members into account.

Several delegations called for the inclusion of the chairs of sanctions committees in the drafting of

Council decisions.<sup>228</sup> The representative of Liechtenstein called for the finalization of the outstanding presidential note on penholdership. The representative of Costa Rica underlined the need to integrate countries with knowledge and experience of a particular topic, or countries that chaired a subsidiary body, in the negotiation and drafting process. Speaking on behalf of the elected members of the Council, the representative of Viet Nam called for the further implementation of the agreed presidential note on the selection of the chairs of subsidiary bodies and renewed discussions on the note on co-penholdership. Furthermore, the delegation of the United Arab Emirates urged that the chairs of sanctions committees be consulted in drafting Council outcomes if they were not serving as co-penholders.

With regard to the use of the veto, the representatives of New Zealand and the Philippines noted that the matter was intrinsically connected to the Council's working methods and was an important area to reform. The delegation of Argentina said that the use of the veto limited the Council's action, with a considerable impact on the agility of the Council's work both in normal times and in the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Several delegations expressed their support for the initiative of France and Mexico for the voluntary and collective suspension of the use of the veto of permanent members in cases involving mass atrocities and the code of conduct of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group, which provided that Council members should refrain from voting against credible Council action against genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes.<sup>229</sup> The representative of Liechtenstein remained convinced that the use of a veto should automatically result in the convening of the General Assembly to discuss the matter. The representative of Cuba expressed support for the elimination of the veto to limit exclusionary practices and ensure genuine participation and democratization in the Council's work and decision-making.

Most Council members welcomed the adoption of new working methods by the Council during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the written procedure for the adoption of decisions. Several delegations stressed the need for the Council to maintain transparency in the decision-making process under

<sup>227</sup> Russian Federation, Viet Nam (on behalf of the elected members of the Council), Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand (on behalf of 24 countries that had served as elected Council members between 2011 and 2019), Nigeria, Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Republic of Korea, Singapore, Switzerland (on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group), Turkey and United Arab Emirates.

<sup>228</sup> Brazil, Costa Rica, New Zealand (on behalf of 24 countries that had served as elected Council members between 2011 and 2019) and United Arab Emirates.

<sup>229</sup> Canada, Ecuador, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Singapore, Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries) and Switzerland (on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group).

those extraordinary circumstances.<sup>230</sup> The delegation of Chile highlighted the Council's achievement in going beyond the conventional working methods and utilizing new technologies to facilitate decision-making during the global pandemic.

### Case 8

#### Maintenance of international peace and security

At its 8699th meeting, held on 9 January at the initiative of Viet Nam, which held the presidency for the month,<sup>231</sup> the Council held an open debate under the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security" and the sub-item entitled "Upholding the United Nations Charter", marking the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Charter of the United Nations. During the open debate, a number of speakers<sup>232</sup> discussed the use of a veto by the permanent members of the Council in the context of the purposes and principles of the Charter. The representative of Lithuania affirmed that inaction on the part of the Council and the international community, directly or indirectly, encouraged aggression and the use of force and threatened the entire multilateral system, based on international law. She added that restraining the use of the veto would make the Council's responses to ongoing crises more coherent and reliable and expressed her country's strong support for the initiative to limit the use of the veto in cases involving mass atrocities, genocide, war crimes or crimes against humanity.<sup>233</sup> Similarly, several speakers expressed support for the initiative by France and Mexico to limit the use of the veto.<sup>234</sup> The representative of Estonia recalled that those with special tools and privileges granted by the Charter had a special responsibility, particularly with regard to the veto, and added that countries should refrain from voting against initiatives aimed at preventing or halting mass atrocities.<sup>235</sup> The representative of the United Kingdom noted the commitment not to vote against Council action to stop mass atrocities and crimes against humanity and added

that, despite the lack of agreement on the veto, Member States should also pursue other areas of Council reform. The representative of Ukraine said that, despite what the drafters of the Charter envisioned from Article 27, which showed the intention to remove the prospect of a Council member casting a vote in cases of conflict of interest, that integral part of the Charter was often overlooked.

Underlining that political divisions prevented the Council from taking the action necessary to address some of the worst crises, the representative of Liechtenstein pointed out that the use of the veto had significantly increased over the past decade, most significantly with respect to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. She added that the use of the veto had a paralysing effect on anticipatory obedience, with negative consequences on the ability of the Council to perform its tasks, and expressed support for the "automatic convening" of the General Assembly, on behalf of the entire membership, whenever a veto was cast in the Council to discuss the matter.<sup>236</sup> The representative of Costa Rica expressed support for Liechtenstein's proposal and added that when a permanent member resorted to the veto or the threat of the veto, it publicly turned its back on the right of victims to justice and peace and undermined international efforts to combat impunity. He noted that if the Council was to discharge its crucial role of upholding respect for the Charter, it should borne in mind that the use of the veto, principally when atrocity crimes were involved, betrayed the trust of millions of people in the United Nations as their last source of hope.<sup>237</sup> The representative of Croatia stated that effective prevention was too often blocked by divisions in the Council and the use of the veto by its permanent members. The representative of Albania underlined that membership in the Council was a responsibility, not a privilege, and implied the exercise of that responsibility on behalf of all Members of the United Nations, in the light of the purposes and principles of the Charter. She added that the use of the veto to protect narrow national interests in situations of mass atrocities was unacceptable. The representative of Egypt also pointed out the contradiction in the use of the Charter, for it afforded only five States the right of the veto, which created a fundamental imbalance in the effectiveness and credibility of the Council and the United Nations in many situations.<sup>238</sup>

<sup>230</sup> France, United Kingdom, Austria, Brazil, Chile, Fiji, Italy, Liechtenstein and Philippines.

<sup>231</sup> The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 31 December 2019 (S/2020/1).

<sup>232</sup> See S/PV.8699. The meeting was resumed on 10 and 13 January (S/PV.8699 (Resumption 1) and S/PV.8699 (Resumption 2)).

<sup>233</sup> See S/PV.8699.

<sup>234</sup> See S/PV.8699 (France, Belgium, Liechtenstein and Mexico); S/PV.8699 (Resumption 1) (Croatia); and S/PV.8699 (Resumption 2) (Djibouti and Austria).

<sup>235</sup> See S/PV.8699.

<sup>236</sup> For more information on that proposal, see part IV, sect. I.

<sup>237</sup> See S/PV.8699 (Resumption 1).

<sup>238</sup> See S/PV.8699.

## X. Languages

### Note

Section X covers rules 41 to 47 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, which relate to the official and working languages of the Council, interpretation and the languages of meeting records and published resolutions and decisions.

#### Rule 41

*Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish shall be both the official and the working languages of the Security Council.*

#### Rule 42

*Speeches made in any of the six languages of the Security Council shall be interpreted into the other five languages.*

#### Rule 43

*[Deleted]*

#### Rule 44

*Any representative may make a speech in a language other than the languages of the Security Council. In this case, he shall himself provide for interpretation into one of those languages. Interpretation into the other languages of the Security Council by the interpreters of the Secretariat may be based on the interpretation given in the first such language.*

#### Rule 45

*Verbatim records of meetings of the Security Council shall be drawn up in the languages of the Council.*

#### Rule 46

*All resolutions and other documents shall be published in the languages of the Security Council.*

#### Rule 47

*Documents of the Security Council shall, if the Security Council so decides, be published in any language other than the languages of the Council.*

During the period under review, rules 41 to 47 were applied consistently in meetings of the Council. There were no meetings where speakers delivered their statements in a language other than the six official languages of the United Nations, as provided for in

rule 44. However, because of technical constraints, Council videoconferences held from 24 March to 31 August 2020 were conducted only in English.<sup>239</sup> On 31 August, Council members commenced the use of a remote interpretation platform for open videoconferences. The need to ensure multilingualism in the videoconferences was raised by Council members and non-Council members during their discussions and in communications of the Council.

### Discussions

At the open videoconference<sup>240</sup> held on 15 May in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council (S/2017/507)”, several members and non-members of the Council stressed the need to ensure the availability of interpretation in all six official languages of the Council in videoconferences.<sup>241</sup> The representative of France stated that as the Council moved to videoconference meetings to adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic, the only victim in that process was multilingualism. He expressed the opinion that the language regime of the United Nations was established to enable the proper functioning of its deliberative bodies and that the legitimacy and efficiency of the Organization depended on respect for that core value. He added that, as French was also a working language of the United Nations, his delegation would conduct the presidency of the Council in June 2020 in that language. The representative of Canada stated that open debates should allow for the full and active participation of all interested Member States in the official language of their choice.

More generally, the representative of Bahrain underscored the need for Council documents in the six official languages to be made available promptly on the Council’s website. Similarly, the delegation of Egypt stated that it was important to ensure that the documents and reports submitted to the Council were made available to the wider membership and in all six official languages of the United Nations, unless they included information related to the national security of States that did not wish to make that information available to the public.

<sup>239</sup> See S/2020/273 and S/2020/372. Nonetheless, under the presidency of France in June 2020, members of the Council delivered statements in videoconferences in both English and French (see, for example, S/2020/514).

<sup>240</sup> See S/2020/418.

<sup>241</sup> France, United Kingdom, Austria, Canada, El Salvador, Lebanon and Switzerland (on behalf of the members of the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency Group).



At an open videoconference<sup>242</sup> held on 8 September in connection with the item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations”, focusing on the role of the International Organization of la Francophonie, the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie stated that linguistic diversity had been undermined in recent months and had contributed to creating inequities in the participation of various members of the Council, as well as stakeholders and members of the public that followed the Council’s work. He therefore welcomed the use, for the first time, of the Council’s new multilingual videoconferencing system, which allowed participants to have access to simultaneous interpretation of the six official languages of the United Nations, including French. He described it as a very important step towards ensuring that all delegations could participate from a distance in the work of the Council fully, equitably and effectively. The representatives of Belgium and the Niger also welcomed the availability of interpretation during the videoconference.

<sup>242</sup> [S/2020/893](#).

## Communications

Given the limitations on the use of interpretation in the videoconferences of the Council, in a letter dated 2 September 2020 addressed to the representatives of the members of the Council,<sup>243</sup> the representative of the Niger, the President of the Council for the month, noted his intention to conduct the business of the Council and deliver the Niger’s national statements during that month in its official language, with the English versions of such statements being made available to Council members in advance. In that regard, the President encouraged the deployment of the interpretation platform to allow Council members to speak in their official languages during videoconferences as soon as possible. In a letter dated 2 November 2020,<sup>244</sup> the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the President of the Council for the month, noted that Council members had agreed that multilingualism would be prioritized in November 2020 for greater effectiveness and involvement at its meetings.

<sup>243</sup> [S/2020/877](#).

<sup>244</sup> [S/2020/1077](#).

## XI. Status of the provisional rules of procedure

### Note

Section XI covers the deliberations of the Council concerning its provisional rules of procedure. Article 30 of the Charter of the United Nations provides that the Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure. Since their adoption by the Council at its first meeting, held on 17 January 1946, the provisional rules of procedure have been amended 11 times, with the last amendment being adopted in 1982.<sup>245</sup> On 27 December 2019, the Council issued a note by the President providing that, in line with the efforts of the United Nations and its Member States to promote the advancement of women and greater gender inclusivity

and equality in their policies and practices, the members of the Council confirmed, as a matter of existing practice, that any reference to a male person in the Council’s provisional rules of procedure was deemed not to be limited to male persons and also constituted a reference to a female person, unless the context clearly indicated otherwise.<sup>246</sup>

### Article 30

*The Security Council shall adopt its own rules of procedure, including the method of selecting its President.*

During the period under review, the question of the status of the provisional rules of procedure, including in connection with Article 30 of the Charter, was raised at the open videoconference<sup>247</sup> held on 15 May in connection with the item entitled “Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#))”. The representative of Cuba, echoed by the delegation of Fiji, called for the adoption of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure, which, she noted, remained provisional to date. The delegation of India stated that while some

<sup>245</sup> The provisional rules of procedure of the Council were amended five times during the Council’s first year, at its 31st, 41st, 42nd, 44th and 48th meetings, held on 9 April, 16 and 17 May and 6 and 24 June 1946; twice in its second year, at its 138th and 222nd meetings, on 4 June and 9 December 1947; and subsequently at its 468th meeting on 28 February 1950; 1463rd meeting, on 24 January 1969; 1761st meeting, on 17 January 1974; and 2410th meeting, on 21 December 1982. The provisional rules were issued under the symbols [S/96](#) and [S/96/Add.1](#), with subsequent versions being issued as revisions, the latest of which was issued under the symbol [S/96/Rev.7](#).

<sup>246</sup> [S/2019/996](#).

<sup>247</sup> [S/2020/418](#).

had argued that the provisional status of the rules enabled the Council to have greater flexibility and adopt new practices when the situation demanded, that approach specifically limited the role of the elected members, who were left to deal with procedural uncertainties.

As described in more detail in section I above, in the letters from the President of the Council dated 2 April and 7 May 2020<sup>248</sup> it was agreed that the

presidencies would work “in the spirit” of the Council’s provisional rules of procedure to ensure that Council members participating in a virtual Council discussion were represented by appropriately credentialed delegates, pursuant to rule 13 of the provisional rules of procedure; that the agenda was adopted at the outset of each videoconference, pursuant to rule 9; and that any other relevant rules were observed as a matter of practice, under Chapter VI of the provisional rules of procedure.

<sup>248</sup> See [S/2020/273](#) and [S/2020/372](#).

## Annex

### Videoconferences held by the members of the Council, 2020

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
30 March 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Closed <sup>a</sup> <a href="#">S/2020/254</a>		
30 March 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Closed <sup>a</sup> <a href="#">S/2020/263</a>		
30 March 2020	Non-proliferation/Democratic People’s Republic of Korea	Closed/adoption <sup>a</sup> <a href="#">S/2020/270</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2515 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/246</a>
30 March 2020	The situation in Somalia	Closed/adoption <sup>a</sup> <a href="#">S/2020/266</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2516 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/247</a>
30 March 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Closed/adoption <sup>a</sup> <a href="#">S/2020/267</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2517 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/248</a>
30 March 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Closed/adoption <sup>a</sup> <a href="#">S/2020/268</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2518 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/249</a>
31 March 2020	The situation in Afghanistan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/274</a>		
7 April 2020	The situation in Mali	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/286</a>		
14 April 2020	Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2016/53</a> )	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/305</a>		
16 April 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/313</a>		
21 April 2020	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	Open <a href="#">S/2020/340</a>		
22 April 2020	The situation in the Great Lakes region	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/325</a>		



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<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
23 April 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Open <a href="#">S/2020/341</a>		
24 April 2020	Security Council resolutions <a href="#">1160 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1199 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1203 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1239 (1999)</a> and <a href="#">1244 (1999)</a>	Open <a href="#">S/2020/339</a>		
24 April 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/336</a>		
27 April 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/346</a>		
28 April 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/351</a>		
29 April 2020	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	Open <a href="#">S/2020/340</a>	<a href="#">S/PRST/2020/6</a>	
29 April 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/353</a>		
29 April 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/354</a>		
5 May 2020	The situation in Libya	Open <a href="#">S/2020/371</a>		
6 May 2020	The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Open <a href="#">S/2020/379</a>		
12 May 2020	The situation concerning Iraq	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/397</a>		
14 May 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/411</a>		
14 May 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/408</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2519 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/405</a>
15 May 2020	Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2017/507</a> )	Open <a href="#">S/2020/418</a>		
18 May 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/420</a>		
19 May 2020	The situation in Libya	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/421</a>		
19 May 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/427</a>		
20 May 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/430</a>		
20 May 2020	The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	Open <a href="#">S/2020/435</a>		
21 May 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/436</a>		

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
27 May 2020	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	Open <a href="#">S/2020/465</a>		
28 May 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/489</a>		
29 May 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/466</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2520 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/459</a>
29 May 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/469</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2521 (2020)</a> 12-0-3	<a href="#">S/2020/462</a>
29 May 2020	The situation concerning Iraq	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/467</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2522 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/460</a>
29 May 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and the South Sudan	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/468</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2523 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/461</a>
3 June 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/496</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2524 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/494</a>
3 June 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/497</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2525 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/495</a>
4 June 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Open <a href="#">S/2020/514</a>		
5 June 2020	Peace and security in Africa	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/515</a>		
5 June 2020	The situation in Libya	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/509</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2526 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/504</a>
8 June 2020	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Open <a href="#">S/2020/527</a>		
9 June 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open <a href="#">S/2020/528</a>		
9 June 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open <a href="#">S/2020/529</a>		
10 June 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali	Closed		
10 June 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open <a href="#">S/2020/538</a>		
11 June 2020	The situation in Mali	Open <a href="#">S/2020/541</a>		
12 June 2020	Central African region	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/542</a>		

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
15 June 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	Closed		
15 June 2020	Threats to international peace and security	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/547</a>		
16 June 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/551</a>		
18 June 2020	Briefing by the High Commissioner for Refugees	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/560</a>		
19 June 2020	The question concerning Haiti	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/568</a>		
22 June 2020	The situation in the Central African Republic	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/572</a>		
22 June 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/573</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2527 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/569</a>
23 June 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/582</a>		
24 June 2020	Children and armed conflict	Open <a href="#">S/2020/594</a>		
24 June 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Open <a href="#">S/2020/596</a>		
25 June 2020	The situation in Afghanistan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/597</a>		
25 June 2020	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/598</a>		
25 June 2020	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/601</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2528 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/589</a>
25 June 2020	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/602</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2529 (2020)</a> 14-0-1	<a href="#">S/2020/590</a>
29 June 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/635</a>		
29 June 2020	Peace and security in Africa	Open <a href="#">S/2020/636</a>		
29 June 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/624</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2530 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/612</a>
29 June 2020	The situation in Mali	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/625</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2531 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/613</a>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
30 June 2020	Non-proliferation	Open <a href="#">S/2020/644</a>		
1 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/638</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2532 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/632</a>
2 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/663</a>		
7 July 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Open <a href="#">S/2020/674</a>		
7 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/661</a>	Draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/654</a> not adopted 13-2-0	<a href="#">S/2020/657</a>
8 July 2020	The situation in Libya	Open <a href="#">S/2020/686</a>		
8 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/671</a>	Draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/658</a> not adopted 4-7-4	<a href="#">S/2020/664</a>
9 July 2020	Peace and security in West Africa	Open <a href="#">S/2020/706</a>		
10 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/693</a>	Draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/667</a> not adopted 13-2-0	<a href="#">S/2020/681</a>
10 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/694</a>	Draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/683</a> not adopted 4-7-4	<a href="#">S/2020/688</a>
11 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/702</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2533 (2020)</a> 12-0-3	<a href="#">S/2020/698</a>
15 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/721</a>		
16 July 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus	Closed		
17 July 2020	Women and peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/727</a>		
21 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Open <a href="#">S/2020/736</a>		
23 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/743</a>		
24 July 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/751</a>		
29 July 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/758</a>		

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
6 August 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	Open <a href="#">S/2020/791</a>		
10 August 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon	Closed		
12 August 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	Open <a href="#">S/2020/799</a>		
14 August 2020	Non-proliferation	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/805</a>	Draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/797</a> not adopted 2-2-11	<a href="#">S/2020/803</a>
19 August 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/823</a>		
24 August 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	Open <a href="#">S/2020/836</a>		
25 August 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/837</a>		
26 August 2020	The situation concerning Iraq	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/845</a>		
27 August 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/866</a>		
28 August 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/857</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2539 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/853</a>
28 August 2020	United Nations Peacekeeping operations	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/856</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2538 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/851</a>
28 August 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/858</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2540 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/854</a>
31 August 2020	The situation in Mali	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/867</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2541 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/859</a>
31 August 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/870</a>	Draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/852</a> not adopted 14-1-0	<a href="#">S/2020/865</a>
2 September 2020	The situation in Libya	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/879</a>		
3 September 2020	The situation in Afghanistan	Open <a href="#">S/2020/891</a>		
8 September 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations	Open <a href="#">S/2020/893</a>		
9 September 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/897</a>		

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
10 September 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/902</a>		
14 September 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Open <a href="#">S/2020/911</a>		
15 September 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open <a href="#">S/2020/913</a>		
16 September 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/915</a>		
16 September 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/914</a>		
17 September 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/929</a>		
17 September 2020	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	Open <a href="#">S/2020/930</a>		
18 September 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/936</a>		
18 September 2020	Threats to international peace and security	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/920</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2544 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/917</a>
24 September 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/953</a>		
5 October 2020	The question concerning Haiti	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/979</a>		
6 October 2020	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/987</a>		
12 October 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara	Closed		
14 October 2020	Identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council ( <a href="#">S/2016/53</a> )	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1023</a>		
20 October 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1037</a>		
21 October 2020	Security Council resolutions <a href="#">1160 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1199 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1203 (1998)</a> , <a href="#">1239 (1999)</a> and <a href="#">1244 (1999)</a>	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1040</a>		



## Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2020

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
26 October 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1055</a>		
27 October 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1049</a>		
28 October 2020	Briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice	Closed		
28 October 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1079</a>		
29 October 2020	Women and peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1084</a>		
30 October 2020	The situation concerning Western Sahara	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1075</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2548 (2020)</a> 13-0-2	<a href="#">S/2020/1063</a>
30 October 2020	Women and peace and security	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1076</a>	Draft resolution <a href="#">S/2020/1054</a> not adopted 5-0-10	<a href="#">S/2020/1066</a>
3 November 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1090</a>		
4 November 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic	Closed		
4 November 2020	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1092</a>		
5 November 2020	The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1103</a>		
5 November 2020	The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1087</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2549 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1085</a>
5 November 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1088</a>		
10 November 2020	The situation in Libya	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1108</a>		
11 November 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1109</a>		
16 November 2020	Peace and security in Africa	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1126</a>		
18 November 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1128</a>		

<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
19 November 2020	The situation in Libya	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1129</a>		
23 November 2020	Briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1143</a>		
23 November 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1136</a>		
24 November 2020	The situation concerning Iraq	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1144</a>		
25 November 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1147</a>		
2 December 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police- contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Closed		
3 December 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1176</a>		
3 December 2020	Maintenance of international peace and security	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1167</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2553 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1166</a>
4 December 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1179</a>	<a href="#">S/PRST/2020/11</a> <a href="#">S/PRST/2020/12</a>	
4 December 2020	The situation in Somalia	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1173</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2554 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1170</a>
8 December 2020	Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police- contributing countries pursuant to resolution <a href="#">1353 (2001)</a> , annex II, sections A and B – United Nations Disengagement Observer Force	Closed		
8 December 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1183</a>		
9 December 2020	Central African region	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1188</a>		
10 December 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1192</a>		
10 December 2020	Threats to international peace and security	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1193</a>		
11 December 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1202</a>		

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<i>Date</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Videoconference format/ record</i>	<i>Outcome</i>	<i>Other documents</i>
11 December 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1235</a>		
14 December 2020	International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1236</a>		
15 December 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1237</a>		
16 December 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1257</a>		
16 December 2020	Briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1258</a>		
17 December 2020	The situation in Afghanistan	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1274</a>		
18 December 2020	The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1286</a>		
18 December 2020	The situation in the Middle East	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1263</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2555 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1252</a>
18 December 2020	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of Congo	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1265</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2556 (2020)</a> 14-0-1	<a href="#">S/2020/1253</a>
18 December 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1266</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2557 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1254</a>
21 December 2020	The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law: strengthening the cooperation between the Security Council and the International Court of Justice	Open	<a href="#">S/PRST/2020/13</a>	
21 December 2020	The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question	Open/closed <a href="#">S/2020/1275</a>		
21 December 2020	Peacebuilding and sustaining peace	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1273</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2558 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1269</a>
22 December 2020	Non-proliferation	Open <a href="#">S/2020/1324</a>		
22 December 2020	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1280</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2559 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1276</a>
29 December 2020	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	Open/adoption <a href="#">S/2020/1311</a>	Resolution <a href="#">2560 (2020)</a> 15-0-0	<a href="#">S/2020/1305</a>

<sup>a</sup> Owing to technical difficulties, these videoconferences were closed instead of open.