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Part I

Consideration of questions under the responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security

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Introductory note

Part I of the present Supplement to the *Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council* provides an overview of the proceedings of the Security Council in connection with the items on its agenda that relate to its responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

In 2020, due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, between 12 March and 14 July 2020 the Council suspended the holding of meetings in-person in the Security Council Chamber. Council members initiated instead the practice of holding videoconferences in open and closed format as a means of continuing the work of the Council. As of 14 July 2020, until the end of the year, the work of the Council developed a hybrid model, alternating meetings in-person with videoconferences. In 2020, videoconferences, whether open or closed, were not considered formal meetings of the Security Council. While meetings in-person continued to be recorded in verbatim records, as customary, the statements delivered in open videoconferences were compiled in letters of the President of the Security Council.

Additionally, in order to surmount the absence of meetings in-person to adopt decisions, Council members agreed that Security Council resolutions would be adopted through a written procedure, the outcome of which would be announced in an open videoconference and having the same legal status as those voted on in the Security Council Chamber. The announcement of the outcome in an open videoconference was not available until April 2020 due to technical difficulties but the communication of the outcome was also made available by a set of letters from the President of the Council, including the outcome of the vote as well as the record of the written procedure and the explanations of vote. Presidential statements would be agreed upon following a non-objection procedure and subsequently announced at an open videoconference having also the same status as those adopted in the Security Council Chamber. Contrary to resolutions, no additional communication by a letter from the President of the Council was made available for the issuance of presidential statements.[1]

[1] Procedural developments recorded in 2020 are featured in part II.

As in past supplements, part I gives the immediate political context in which consideration by the Council of these items evolved during the year 2020, covering meetings and documents of the Council, this year also including letters of the President of the Security Council compiling statements delivered in videoconferences.[2] Consequently, part I features all items in connection with which meetings and/or open videoconferences were held despite the latter not being considered meetings of the Council. Part I constitutes a framework within which the deliberations of the Council expressly related to the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and its provisional rules of procedure can be considered. For that reason, cross-references to all other relevant parts are included in the narrative sections of part I to facilitate the understanding of the structure and content of the *Repertoire*.

Part I also examines the substantive aspects of the Council's practice that are not covered in other parts of the *Repertoire*. For ease of reference, the items are grouped by region, with an additional category of thematic issues. Within each region, items are listed in the order in which they were first included in the list of matters of which the Council is seized. Individual studies highlight significant developments in the Council's consideration of an item that are considered important for contextualizing the decisions taken by the Council.

In contrast to previous supplements, and in light of the hybrid model developed by the Council, the narrative sections in part I are followed, as relevant and appropriate, by (i) a table comprising all procedural information relating to the item, including meetings, sub-items, documents referred to, and speakers, listed in chronological order, and/or (ii) a table including a list of videoconferences held in connection with the items on the Council's agenda. In addition, to illustrate the mainstreaming of thematic issues, sections concerning the items entitled "Children and armed conflict", "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" and "Women and peace and security" are followed by an additional table setting out the relevant provisions of decisions of the Council.

[2] Some of the questions considered in part I were also discussed in informal consultations of the whole among the members of the Council and in closed videoconferences.

Africa

1. The situation concerning Western Sahara

During 2020, the members of the Security Council held one open videoconference in connection with this item to announce the adoption of resolution 2548 (2020).[3] More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below. In addition, the members of the Council held two closed videoconferences to discuss the situation in Western Sahara, at which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations provided briefings.[4] Council members also held a closed videoconference with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001).[5] In addition, Council members held informal consultations of the whole to discuss the situation concerning Western Sahara.[6]

On 30 October 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2548 (2020), extending the mandate of MINURSO for a period of one year, until 31 October 2021.[7] The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions.[8] By the resolution, the Council looked forward to the appointment of a new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara at the earliest opportunity.[9] The Council also emphasized the need to achieve a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution to the question of Western Sahara and expressed its full support for the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to sustain the renewed negotiations process, welcoming the commitment of Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria, and

[3] For information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[4] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 3. The closed videoconferences were held on 9 April and 21 December 2020 respectively. For further information, see S/2020/558.
[5] The closed videoconference was held on 12 October 2020 in connection with 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"; see A/75/2, part II, chap 22.
[6] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 3.
[7] Resolution 2548 (2020), para. 1. For further information on the mandate of MINURSO, see part X, sect. I.
[8] See S/2020/1063.
[9] Resolution 2548 (2020), fourth preambular paragraph.

Mauritania to remain engaged.[10] In that connection, the Council called upon the parties to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.[11]

Nine Council members submitted written statements providing explanations of their votes on resolution 2548 (2020).[12] According to the statement submitted by the Russian Federation, the abstention from the vote was due to the fact that the process of elaborating and endorsing the document had been neither transparent nor consultative. The statement underscored that none of the delegation's principled and well-substantiated considerations, including those of a compromise nature had been taken into account, and a whole range of practical proposals articulated by other Council members had also been left unanswered, resulting in an unbalanced text. The statement also raised concerns regarding the substitution of fundamental principles of the Western Saharan settlement by general remarks about the need to stick to realistic approaches and seek compromise, which produced ambiguity, undermined trust in the Council's work and obscured prospects for resuming the political process. According to the statement, the attempt to boost the peace process by using language that blurred previously agreed parameters of the Western Saharan settlement would rather produce the opposite result.[13]

According to the statement submitted by South Africa, the two abstentions on the mandate renewal of MINURSO during 2019-2020 were due to the substance and working methods of the Western Sahara file. According to the statement, the Security Council working methods on the Western Sahara file had been "uniquely biased and non-transparent". The statement mentioned that South Africa had consistently raised concerns about the "negotiating process" through the Group of Friends, which remained an obstacle to making progress since a draft text would be presented to Council members for it to be accepted as a fait accompli.

[10] Ibid., paras. 2 and 3.
[11] Ibid., para. 4.
[12] Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, United States and Viet Nam. See S/2020/1075, annexes 17-25.
[13] See S/2020/1075.

According to the statement, it was the only mandate that was negotiated in that manner and was not considerate of the views of Member States, particularly of African Member States, which were excluded from the Group of Friends. The statement further submitted that there had been no real attempt to reach a compromise on the contentious paragraphs. Regarding the substance of resolution 2548 (2020), the statement raised several points. It first noted that the text did not reflect the current realities on the ground. It also submitted that the text did not adequately reflect the urgency that the United Nations find a personal envoy to resume the stalled United Nations-led political process and that the text could have been more balanced, including returning to a six-month mandate renewal cycle instead of one year, to send a positive signal to all parties. The statement also noted various concrete comments on the text of the resolution as well as the need for an explicit reference or responsibility given to MINURSO to monitor the human rights situation on the ground.[14]

Among the Council members voting in favour, many welcomed or expressed support for the work of MINURSO[15] and stressed the need for swift appointment of a new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General.[16] According to the statement submitted by Indonesia, the text reflected a delicate balance, considering the sensitivity of the issue, the absence of a Personal Envoy and the lack of an active political process.[17] The statement by Viet Nam stressed the importance of considering the legitimate views of concerned parties with a balanced and impartial approach.[18] The statement submitted by China expressed hope for more thorough consultations on draft resolutions on mandate renewal for MINURSO in the future to make the text more balanced, achieve consensus through consultation and send a positive signal.[19]

At the end of the year, on 15 December 2020, the United States submitted a letter enclosing the President of the United States' Proclamation on Recognizing the Sovereignty of the Kingdom of Morocco over the Western Sahara dated 10 December 2020, recognizing that the entire Western Sahara territory was part of the Kingdom of Morocco and expressing that

[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, United States, Viet Nam.
[16] Ibid., Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, United States.
[17] Ibid.
[18] Ibid.
[19] Ibid.

Morocco's autonomy proposal was "the only basis for a just and lasting solution to the dispute over the Western Sahara territory".[20]

Videoconferences: The situation concerning Western Sahara

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 October 2020	S/2020/1075	Letter dated 30 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2548 (2020) (13-0-2)[a] S/2020/1063 (Record of written procedure)

[a] *In favour:* Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam; *Abstaining*: Russian Federation and South Africa.

[20] See S/2020/1210.

2. The situation in Somalia

During the year under review, the Security Council held four meetings and adopted six decisions on the situation in Somalia, three of which were under Chapter VII of the Charter. Three meetings took the form of briefings, while one was convened to adopt a decision.[21] More information on the meetings, including on participants and speakers, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held nine videoconferences in connection with this item in 2020, four of which were held for the announcement of the vote on the various resolutions adopted.[22] More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole to discuss the situation in Somalia.[23]

In 2020, the Council heard regular briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as well as by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia. In addition, Council members also heard a briefing by the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and by the Founder and Chairwoman of Somali Gender Equity Movement.

The Special Representative briefed Council members further to the quarterly reports by the Secretary-General.[24] He focused on the preparations for the 2020/21 elections, further informing the Council about the persistent attacks by Al-Shabaab which remained the primary threat to Somalia's security, as well as about the acute humanitarian situation compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, flooding and locust infestation. At a meeting held on 24 February

[21] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[22] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[23] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 5. See also S/2020/1142 and S/2020/1045.
[24] S/2020/121, S/2020/398, S/2020/798 and S/2020/1113.

2020, the Special Representative described 2020 as a potentially transformative year for Somalia with the main priorities reflected in achieving debt relief, holding elections, finalizing the federal constitution, making progress in the fight against Al-Shabaab and consolidating the federal State. He informed the Council about the enactment of the new electoral code on 21 February 2020 and regretted that, whilst an important step, the new law did not address many outstanding questions such as the location of constituencies, guaranteeing the 30 per cent of seats for women and finding modalities for Somalis from across the country to vote. Regarding the security situation, he regretted that despite the efforts of the Somali National Army, the African Union Mission in Somalia and international partners, Al-Shabaab retained the ability to conduct large-scale attacks in Mogadishu, including against the United Nations and the international community.[25] In a videoconference held on 21 May 2020, the Special Representative focused on the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that it had also slowed the international partner training needed to generate forces for the fight against Al-Shabaab. Furthermore, he urgently called for a commitment to dialogue and improved cooperation between the Federal Government and all of the federal member states, noting that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia had supported those efforts, as directed in resolution 2461 (2019). The Special Representative reassured Council members that the United Nations forces in Somalia remained present, active and committed to delivering their mandate despite the limitations and additional challenges resulting from the global pandemic and the ongoing security threats.[26] At the 8755th meeting, held on 20 August 2020, the Special Representative provided additional information on electoral preparations, noting that according to the Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission, one-person one-vote elections could take place no earlier than March 2021, and then only if manual voter registration was used, or in August 2021 if the Commission used biometric registration. Affirming that it was up to Somali stakeholders to determine the model that would guide the electoral process, the Special Representative also urged that such a model be arrived at through inclusive dialogue and compromise.[27] In his last briefing of the year, at a videoconference held on 23 November 2020, the Special Representative told Council

[25] See S/PV.8731.
[26] See S/2020/436.
[27] See S/PV.8755.

members that the Somali leadership had agreed on an indirect electoral model, regretting that it had fallen short of the constitutional requirement for direct universal suffrage. He further announced that UNSOM had planned to contribute to the implementation of the electoral agreement and urged Somali leaders to prepare consensually a roadmap to ensure that one-person one-vote elections took place in 2024-2025. The Special Representative also noted that Mohamed Hussein Robleh was appointed Prime Minister in September, whose new Government had the challenging task of steering the country through the electoral process and pursuing the reform agenda across the political, security and economic spectrum.[28] In his briefings, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia informed the Council about the progress of AMISOM's transition plan, announcing that the Mission had completed its drawdown of 1,000 troops by 28 February 2020, as mandated by resolution 2472 (2019). He also briefed on the role of AMISOM related to election security and counter-terrorism.[29]

In 2020, the Council also heard three briefings by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia. On 27 February 2020, the Chair reported on his visit to Mogadishu conducted from 21 to 23 January 2020, and noted that the visit was an important opportunity to help raise awareness of the purpose and scope of the sanctions measures, stressing that the sanctions regime was not static, that it was regularly reviewed and had evolved over the years to reflect changing circumstances.[30] At a videoconference held on 9 June 2020, the Chair informed Council members about the Committee's meeting with UNMAS regarding the implementation of the improvised explosive device (IED)-components ban.[31] In this context, UNMAS had tasked the Panel of Experts with preparing an implementation assistance notice, aimed at providing guidance to all Member States

[28] See S/2020/1136.
[29] See S/2020/436 and S/2021/203.
[30] See S/PV.8735.
[31] See S/2020/529.

on the implementation of the IED-components ban, which was adopted by the Committee on 3 August 2020.[32]

During 2020, discussions among Council members centred on Somalia's preparation for one-person one-vote elections, relations between the Federal Government and federal member states, the security situation in the country, and concerns about the worsening human rights and humanitarian conditions.

Concerning elections, Council members welcomed the adoption of the electoral law in February 2020, underlining the need to address unresolved questions with a view to making the law implementable, and to organize free and fair elections. Council members further noted the importance of respecting the principles agreed to in the Mutual Accountability Framework, including the issue of women's participation in the electoral process.[33] In addition, Council members mentioned the importance of holding timely and inclusive elections based on a broad agreement among all relevant stakeholders.[34] Regarding the overall political situation in the country, Council members welcomed the resumption of dialogue between the Federal Government and federal member states in August 2020, further calling on all stakeholders to work together to reach an agreement on the constitutional review.[35]

With regard to the security situation in Somalia, Council members deliberated on the post-2021 security model, noting the importance of a Somali-led transition plan and expressing concern over Al-Shabaab as the main source of violence and primary threat to the country's security.[36] In this context, several members noted the use of improvised explosive devices by Al-

[32] See S/2020/529 and S/2020/1079. For further information on the mandate of the Committee, see part IX, sect. I. B.
[33] See S/PV.8731, United Kingdom, United States, Dominican Republic and Russian Federation.
[34] See S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium, Dominican Republic, United States, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Estonia, Viet Nam, Germany, China and France.
[35] See S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Estonia, China and Indonesia.
[36] See S/PV.8731, United States, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Belgium; S/PV.8755, Belgium and United States.

Shabaab in its terrorist attacks.[37] In relation to AMISOM, several Council members underscored the importance of its drawdown taking place in line with the threat assessments on the ground and the established transition plan from AMISOM to the Somali security forces.[38] During the meetings held in February and August, the representative of France noted that it was necessary to continue to implement the security transition plan from AMISOM to the Somali security forces with a view to transferring the security responsibilities by the end of 2021.[39] At the same meetings, the representatives of the three African members and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stated their position that any reconfiguration or drawdown of AMISOM had to be conditions-based and not lead to a security vacuum,[40] and the representative of the Russian Federation objected to attempts by a number of countries to forcibly expedite the drawdown of AMISOM.[41]

In February, May and August, Council members also discussed the impact of climate on the security and humanitarian situation in the country. Council members noted that humanitarian challenges were compounded by the triple threat of desert locust infestation, flood and drought cycles and the COVID-19 pandemic.[42]

On the human rights front, several Council members expressed concern over the new bill on sexual intercourse-related crimes and called for the protection of children, women and girls and the respect of Somalia's international obligations.[43] In addition, several Council members raised concerns over the freedom of expression, and the representative of Estonia called on the Federal Government of Somalia to take steps to establish a national human rights commission.[44]

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[37] See S/2020/436, Estonia, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and United Kingdom; and S/PV.8755, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation and Indonesia.
[38] See S/PV.8731, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Estonia.
[39] See S/PV.8731 and S/PV.8755.
[40] See S/PV.8731, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and S/PV.8755, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[41] See S/PV.8755.
[42] See S/PV.8731, S/2020/436 and S/PV.8755.
[43] See S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Estonia, Germany and France.
[44] See S/PV.8731, United Kingdom, Germany, France and S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium and Estonia.

In 2020, the Council adopted six resolutions in connection with this item, three of which were under Chapter VII of the Charter. By resolutions 2516 (2020) and 2527 (2020), adopted unanimously on 30 March and 22 June, the Council provided for two sequential technical roll-overs of the mandate of UNSOM for periods of three and two months until 30 June 2020 and 31 August 2020, respectively.[45] On 28 August, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2540 (2020), extending the mandate of UNSOM for a period of one year until 31 August 2021.[46] In addition to reiterating the existing mandate, the Council decided that UNSOM would continue to coordinate the United Nations efforts, with a particular focus on, inter alia, providing support, through the exercise of its good offices and through technical, operational and logistical assistance for the delivery of elections enabling as many citizens as possible to vote in 2020/2021.[47] It further mandated UNSOM to provide support to the Federal Government of Somalia in the implementation of the 2019 Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) for Somalia.[48] The Council urged the Somali authorities to create a conducive political and security climate for inclusive elections across Somalia and called upon all Federal Member States to allow the National Independent Electoral Commission to operate freely to deliver an agreed electoral model.[49] The Council also underlined the need for the Federal Government of Somalia to establish and operationalise the National Human Rights Commission and urged the Federal Government of Somalia, with the support of the United Nations, to accelerate the implementation of the Joint Communiqué and the adoption and implementation of the new National Action Plan to Combat Sexual Violence in Conflict.[50] In addition, the Council requested the United Nations, the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states to consider the adverse implications of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors, in their programmes in Somalia.[51]

[45] Resolutions 2516 (2020), para. 1 and 2527 (2020), para. 1. For further information on the mandate of UNSOM, see part X, sect. II.
[46] Resolution 2540 (2020), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of UNSOM, see part X, sect. II.
[47] Ibid., para. 5(c).
[48] Ibid., para. 5(i).
[49] Ibid., para. 7.
[50] Ibid., para. 12.
[51] Ibid., para. 13.

Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, on 29 May 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2520 (2020), authorizing the Member States of the African Union to maintain the deployment of 19,626 uniformed AMISOM personnel until 28 February 2021, inclusive of a minimum of 1,040 AMISOM police personnel including five Formed Police Units, to support security preparations for elections due at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021, and to conduct tasks in line with an updated Somali-led Transition Plan and the handover of security to Somali security forces by 2021. It also decided that AMISOM would be authorised to take all necessary measures to carry out its mandate.[52] By this resolution, the Council also urged the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states to take concrete action to fulfil the priority measures in the 2019 Mutual Accountability Framework essential to Somali security and underlined its intention to assess the security support needed to prepare Somalia towards taking on the leading role on security by the end of 2021 and post-2021.[53]

On 12 November 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2551 (2020), under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the abstention of China and the Russian Federation. By this resolution, the Council reaffirmed the arms embargo and renewed the exemptions on deliveries of weapons and military equipment or the provision of technical advice, financial and other assistance, and training related to military activities intended solely for the development of the Somali National Security Forces or Somalia security sector institutions.[54] For the first time, the Council renewed the humanitarian exemption to the assets freeze without specifying an expiry date.[55] The Council also recalled previous decisions regarding the asset freeze and travel ban measures, as well as the ban on charcoal.[56] By the same resolution, the Council also renewed the maritime interdiction of charcoal and weapons or military equipment until 15 November 2021,[57] and reaffirmed the ban on components of improvised explosive devices imposed by resolution 2498 (2019).[58] In

[52] Resolution 2520 (2020), paras. 9, 10 and 11. For more information on the mandate of AMISOM, see part VIII, sect. IV.
[53] Ibid., paras. 2 and 5.
[54] Resolution 2551 (2020), paras. 6 to 8, 9 to 18.
[55] Ibid., para. 22.
[56] Ibid., paras. 20 to 22 and 23 to 25.
[57] Ibid., para. 23.
[58] Ibid., para. 26. For further information on the sanctions measures concerning Somalia, see part VII, sect. III. See also *Repertoire*, Supplement 2019, part I.

addition, the Council renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Somalia until 15 December 2021.[59] Explaining their abstention, the representatives of China and the Russian Federation stated that their concerns and observations were not taken on board during the consultations on the draft resolution.[60] Specifically, the representative of China noted that the proposal to explore benchmarks for assessing the appropriateness of lifting the arms embargo were not taken on board in the resolution and that the text failed to duly respond to the strong desire of the Somali Government to have the arms embargo lifted. In addition, he said that the text failed to effectively address the concerns of Djibouti and Eritrea, encouraging both countries to improve their ties through bilateral consultations.[61] Similarly, the representative of the Russian Federation deemed inappropriate the inclusion of paragraphs on Djibouti and Eritrea in a document focusing on Somalia. She also regretted the continued practice of using Council resolutions to promote human rights-related aspects of the Somalia dossier, stressing that there was a separate body – the Human Rights Council – that existed to address those issues. In response, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that given the divergent views between the parties and among Council members regarding the relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, the text of the resolution was the fairest outcome and the best way to ensure that the Council could support further progress towards resolving those outstanding issues.

On 4 December 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2554 (2020) under Chapter VII of the Charter, renewing for a further period of 12 months the authorizations set out in paragraph 14 of resolution 2500 (2019), granted to States and regional organizations cooperating with Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.[62]

[59] Ibid., para. 30. For further information on the mandate of the Panel, see part IX, sect. I.
[60] See S/PV.8775, China and Russian Federation.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Resolution 2554 (2020), para. 14. See also resolutions 1846 (2008), para. 10, and 2246 (2015), para. 14. For further information, see also *Repertoire*, Supplements covering the period 2008-2019.

Table 1
Meetings: The situation in Somalia

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8731 24 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2020/121)		Somalia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute	12 Council members,[a] all invitees [b]	
S/PV.8735 27 February 2020			Somalia		10 Council members,[c] Somalia	
S/PV.8755 20 August 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2020/798)		Somalia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia	12 Council members,[d] all invitees [e]	
S/PV.8775 12 November 2020	Letter dated 28 September 2020 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/949)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/1100)	Somalia		Four Council members (China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States), Somalia	Resolution 2551 (2020) 13-0-2[f] (adopted under Chapter VII)

[a] Tunisia spoke also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa.

[b] The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia participated in the meeting via videoconference from Addis Ababa.

[c] China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. The representative of Belgium spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992).

[d] South Africa spoke also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

[e] The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia participated in the meeting via videoconference from Mogadishu.
[f] *In favour*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *Against*: None. *Abstaining*: China and Russian Federation.

Table 2
Videoconferences: The situation in Somalia

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 March 2020[a]	S/2020/247	Letter dated 30 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2516 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/266 (record of written procedure)
21 May 2020	S/2020/436	Letter dated 27 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 May 2020	S/2020/459	Letter dated 29 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2520 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/466 (record of written procedure)
9 June 2020	S/2020/529	Letter dated 11 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
22 June 2020	S/2020/569	Letter dated 23 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2527 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/573 (record of written procedure)
28 August 2020	S/2020/854	Letter dated 29 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2540 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/858 (record of written procedure)
28 October 2020	S/2020/1079	Letter dated 30 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
23 November 2020	S/2020/1136	Letter dated 25 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

4 December 2020	S/2020/1170	Letter dated 4 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2554 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/1173 (record of written procedure)

[a] Due to technical difficulties, instead of an open videoconference to announce the vote on resolution 2516 (2020) the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

3. The situation in the Great Lakes region

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting on the situation in the Great Lakes region, which took the form of a briefing.[63] In addition, in 2020, Council members held one videoconference but did not adopt any decision in connection with this item.[64] More information on the meetings and videoconferences is provided in the tables below.

Further to the two reports of the Secretary-General,[65] during his briefings, the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region focused on the activities of his office in supporting the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region.

In the videoconference held on 22 April 2020, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General informed the Council about the public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting its negative repercussions on the economy and the implications for peace, security and development of the region.[66] In that context, he informed the Council that the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework had been affected, resulting in the postponement of important meetings which were to be held in the region, including the second Great Lakes Investment and Trade Conference and the tenth Summit of the Regional Oversight Mechanism.[67] Nevertheless, optimism remained given the peaceful political transition in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the progress in normalizing relations between Uganda and Rwanda, the formation of a unity Government in South Sudan and the diplomatic settlement by the Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia of their border dispute. In support of the regional efforts to increase coordination and exchange of information among the armed forces of the countries of the region, the Special Envoy facilitated discussions among the heads of intelligence services of Burundi, Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the

[63] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.
[64] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[65] S/2020/272 and S/2020/951.
[66] See S/2020/325.
[67] Ibid.

Congo, Rwanda and Tanzania. In this regard, the Special Envoy requested the Council's support to enable those countries to secure the necessary technical and financial assistance to implement the measures to be adopted by the Heads of State of the region.[68] The Special Envoy noted, however, that there were still challenges, the greatest of which remained the activities of armed groups, including the illicit exploitation of natural resources. He also referred to the upcoming elections in the region, particularly in Burundi and the Central African Republic, which needed to be closely followed. Faced with the challenges exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the continuing Ebola epidemic, he affirmed the need to redouble efforts to support the States and peoples of the Great Lakes region to overcome the two public health crises and to consolidate the progress made so far in implementing the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework. For his part, in collaboration with the guarantors of the Framework and international partners, the Special Envoy announced his five priorities for the following months, namely, the mobilization of the international community in helping the countries of the region to address the COVID-19 pandemic; supporting the ongoing facilitation processes; encouraging regional security cooperation by promoting a comprehensive approach, with military and non-military measures, in combating armed groups; engaging in regional and international discussions on the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources; and continuing the necessary discussions on the convening of the next summit of the Framework's Regional Oversight Mechanism and of the Great Lakes Investment and Trade Conference.[69]

During the discussion, Council members expressed support for the work of the Special Envoy and mentioned the importance of a new peace and security strategy for the Great Lakes region.[70] Several Council members also echoed the Secretary-General's ceasefire appeal and highlighted its importance in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the humanitarian situation and political processes in the region.[71] Council members further noted the positive developments in the region, at the same time warning about the risk of losing the momentum of

[68] Ibid., p. 3.
[69] Ibid., p. 4.
[70] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Russian Federation, and Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[71] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

regional cooperation. On Burundi, the representative of France expressed vigilance and noted that peaceful, inclusive and credible elections would contribute to the region's path towards political stability and peace. Similarly, the representatives of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States expressed concerns about the electoral environment and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the elections in Burundi.[72] The representative of Tunisia, speaking also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, noted the ongoing preparations for the general elections in Burundi as the only viable alternative to lead the country to consolidate a peaceful and stable political environment. The representative of the Russian Federation stated that political decisions could lead to long-term stability only if they were taken by the countries themselves.

At its 8767th meeting, held on 13 October 2020, the Council heard a second semi-annual briefing from the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region.[73] Overall, he noted that the situation in the region over the past months had remained stable with encouraging progress despite the ongoing challenges. On the political front, the Special Envoy welcomed the peaceful transfer of power in Burundi following the May general elections and the fact that the countries of the region were availing themselves of diplomatic means and regional mechanisms to resolve their differences peacefully, as seen in the resolution of the border dispute between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia. The Special Envoy also cited as another positive example the commitment of Rwanda and Uganda to proceed in the process of normalizing their relations through the good offices of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He noted, however, that the security and humanitarian situations continued to be cause for concern and made reference to the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In this regard, he mentioned that the activities of armed groups operating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to cause intolerable humanitarian suffering. He explained that the impunity enjoyed by those responsible for those crimes traumatized the population and negatively affected relations between the countries of the region, affirming that he intended to continue his advocacy to strengthen the fight against impunity, in particular by effectively implementing the Nairobi

[72] Ibid., Germany, United Kingdom and United States.
[73] See S/PV.8767.

Declaration on Justice and Good Governance. Regarding the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework, the Special Envoy informed the Council about the initiatives he had carried out in line with his five priorities outlined on 22 April 2020. He further announced that he had submitted the United Nations strategy for peace consolidation and conflict resolution and prevention in the Great Lakes region to the Secretary-General on 12 October 2020. He indicated that ten priorities had emerged from the various consultations held aimed at providing a comprehensive ten-year road map for United Nations action in the region focusing on a number of concrete priority actions, particularly in the areas of preventive diplomacy, security cooperation, development, the promotion of human rights and strengthening of the role of women and young people by the year 2023.[74]

During deliberations, Council members noted the positive developments in the region, at the same time expressing concern over the security and humanitarian situation, in particular in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.[75] In addition, Council members reiterated their support for the work of the Special Envoy and welcomed the finalization of the strategy for peace consolidation and conflict resolution and prevention in the region.[76] In this regard, the representative of Tunisia, speaking also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, commended the efforts of the Special Envoy in leading the development of the strategy, which they hoped would help identify and elaborate priorities and streamline the United Nations peace consolidation, conflict prevention and conflict resolution engagements. Similarly, the representative of Belgium hoped that the strategy would allow for an adequate and coherent United Nations footprint in the context of the gradual exit from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and an adaptation of the United Nations approach and presence in Burundi. Furthermore, the representative of Tunisia, speaking also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, stated that they were encouraged by the positive response of several Member States in the region

[74] Ibid., pp. 2-4.
[75] Ibid., Germany, United Kingdom, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and the Russian Federation.
[76] Ibid., France, Germany, United Kingdom, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Indonesia (also on behalf of Viet Nam), Belgium and the Russian Federation.

to the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, which was supported by resolution 2532 (2020). With regard to Burundi, Council members noted some positive developments and welcomed the peaceful transfer of power following the last election. The representatives of China and the Russian Federation also noted that Burundi no longer posed a threat to international peace and security, and that it should be removed from the agenda of the Council.[77]

Meetings: the situation in the Great Lakes region

Meeting and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8767 13 October 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region (S/2020/951)		Democratic Republic of the Congo	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region[a]	11 Council members,[b] all invitees	

[a] The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region participated in the meeting via videoconference.
[b] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia (also spoke on behalf of Viet Nam), Russian Federation, Tunisia (also spoke on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa), United Kingdom and United States.

Videoconferences: the situation in the Great Lakes region

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
22 April 2020	S/2020/325	Letter dated 24 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[77] Ibid. On 4 December 2020, in connection with the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security", the Council issued a presidential statement relating to Burundi (S/PRST/2020/12), requesting the Secretary-General to cease his periodic reporting on the situation in Burundi and looking forward to the Secretary-General covering Burundi as part of his regular reporting on the Great Lakes region and Central Africa. For further details, see part I, sect. 36 and part IX, sect. VI.

4. The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting and adopted two resolutions, both under Chapter VII of the Charter, in connection with the situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo. More information on the meetings, including on participants and speakers, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held four open videoconferences in connection with this item, two of which were held for the announcement of the vote on the resolutions adopted.[78] Council members also held a closed videoconference with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001).[79] More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole and an informal interactive dialogue to discuss this item.[80]

In 2020, the Council was regularly briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO further to the reports of the Secretary-General.[81] The Council was also briefed once by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) and the Director of Save Act Mine.[82]

In her briefings to the Council, the Special Representative provided updates about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Mission's activities and the overall conditions in the country. She also reported about the volatile political situation which resulted in President Tshisekedi's announcement of the end of the ruling coalition in December 2020, as well as the actions undertaken by the Mission to encourage representatives of political forces and civil society to resolve their differences through dialogue and avoid any actions that could incite

[78] For more information on the procedure and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[79] Council members held a closed videoconference on 2 December 2020 in connection with 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"; see A/75/2, part II, chap. 22.
[80] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 12. See also S/2020/258.
[81] S/2020/554, S/2020/919 and S/2020/1150.
[82] See S/2020/598.

violence.[83] She cautioned that the risk of politicking and positioning ahead of the 2023 elections would become the overriding focus, to the exclusion of the governance reforms and stabilization measures that the country needed.[84] She also addressed the continuing security challenges faced by the country, in particular in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, noting that the protection of civilians through an integrated approach remained a central priority for MONUSCO. She also noted that some of the most serious challenges affecting the Democratic Republic of the Congo — from the presence of foreign armed groups to the illegal exploitation of, and trafficking in, mineral resources — required regional and international efforts to achieve sustainable solutions. In that regard, she informed the Council that the Mission would continue to work closely with the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region to support the Government in that respect, as one of the constituents of the United Nations Great Lakes regional stabilization strategy as well as with other regional organizations. In her briefings, the Special Representative also referred to the joint strategy on the progressive and phased drawdown of MONUSCO, shared with the Council by the Secretary-General on 26 October 2020,[85] representing a common vision for the gradual, responsible and sustainable drawdown and exit of the Mission.[86]

Council members discussed the political developments in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in light of the tensions within the ruling coalition, violations of human rights, the volatile security conditions, particularly in the eastern provinces of the country, the deteriorating humanitarian situation, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of regional cooperation, as well as the phased drawdown of MONUSCO.

Regarding the political developments, several Council members called on the Congolese political actors to resolve their differences peacefully and to reduce tensions within the ruling coalition through dialogue.[87] With regard to the human rights situation in the country, Council

[83] See S/PV.8778.
[84] See S/2020/987.
[85] S/2020/1041.
[86] See S/PV.8778.
[87] See S/2020/598, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Viet Nam; S/2020/987, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/PV.8778, Germany, Dominican Republic; Russian Federation, China and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

members were concerned about violations and abuses, including cases of sexual, gender-based violence, and violence against children. In that context, some called for accountability and fight against impunity, strengthening of institutions and continued efforts by the Government to improve the overall human rights environment.[88]

On the humanitarian front, Council members were concerned about the worsening situation intensified by violence and further compounded by flooding, the epidemics of Ebola, measles and cholera, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic.[89] In that regard, the representative of Germany noted that the most vulnerable groups – women, children and internally displaced persons – were the hardest hit by the multiple factors affecting the humanitarian situation.[90] Regarding the security situation, Council members expressed concern over the continuing volatile conditions in the eastern parts of the country, condemning attacks on civilians, MONUSCO and the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) . They also noted the importance of security sector reform and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process. Several members also voiced their support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and regretted the lack of response to it by the armed groups in the country.[91] Council members also discussed the role and the capacity of the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade in addressing the threat posed by the armed groups.[92] In that regard, some members asserted the importance of improving the efficiency of the Brigade through its reconfiguration and prompt implementation of mandated reforms, such as the incorporation of

[88] See S/2020/598, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France and Germany; S/2020/987, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States; S/PV.8778, France, United States, Germany, Dominican Republic, United Kingdom and Estonia.
[89] See S/2020/598, Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom and Viet Nam; S/2020/987, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Viet Nam; S/PV.8778, France, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Germany, Dominican Republic, China, South Africa (speaking also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[90] See S/2020/598 and S/2020/987.
[91] See S/2020/598, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation and United Kingdom; S/2020/987, Estonia, Indonesia, Russian Federation and Viet Nam.
[92] See S/2020/598, Belgium, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and United Kingdom; S/2020/987, Estonia, France, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom and United States; S/PV.8778, France, United States, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, China and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

additional quick-reaction forces.[93] The representative of South Africa, speaking also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, noted that the Brigade required the continued support of the Council and needed to be fully trained to remain effective in addressing the threat against the civilian population in the eastern part of the country.[94] With regard to MONUSCO's drawdown, some Council members affirmed the need to take into account the situation on the ground, with the three African members of the Council and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expressing concern over the prospect of a hastened and rushed drawdown.[95]

Council members also discussed the importance of regional cooperation in tackling a multiplicity of challenges facing the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the broader region.[96] Several members stressed the need for regional collaboration in countering illicit exploitation of natural resources and were encouraged by the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region, alongside MONUSCO, in pursuing a regional strategy in that regard.[97] They further welcomed the continued commitment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to assisting the Democratic Republic of the Congo in achieving sustainable peace, security and stability, as well as the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations in this context.[98]

In 2020, Council members also discussed the work of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004). On 2 June 2020, the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo submitted its final report, concluding that despite relative political stability and significant changes in the command structures of the Congolese security forces, serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law remained widespread in

[93] See S/2020/987, France, United Kingdom and United States; S/PV.8778, France, United States, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[94] See S/2020/987.
[95] See S/2020/598, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/2020/987, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[96] For more information on the situation in the Great Lakes region, see part I, sect. 3.
[97] See S/2020/598, France, Germany and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom and Viet Nam.
[98] See S/2020/987, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/PV.8778, Dominican Republic, Belgium, Russian Federation and South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

that area.[99] On 25 June 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2528 (2020), renewing until 1 July 2021 the sanctions measures as set out in resolution 2293 (2016) and extending until 1 August 2021 the mandate of the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo as set forth in resolution 2360 (2017).[100] Furthermore, on 6 October 2020, Council members held a videoconference at which the Chair of the Committee provided a briefing to Council members covering the work of the Committee during the previous 12 months.[101] Further to the briefing, the representative of France noted that the Committee could do more to address violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by, inter alia, making additional designations. The representative of the Russian Federation affirmed that the restrictions imposed on the country should under no circumstance negatively affect the efficiency of the military operations conducted by the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) against armed groups. The representative of the United States viewed appropriate, targeted and effective sanctions as an essential tool against actors and entities that undermined the peace and security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo reiterated his delegation's appeal to the international community through the General Assembly for appropriate, targeted and effective sanctions against armed groups, networks and other accomplices, which, through their harmful activities, were destroying the Government's efforts aimed at conservation and the sustainable management of biodiversity and the protected areas located in the east of his country.

On 18 December 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2556 (2020), under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the abstention of the Russian Federation. By this resolution, the Council extended the mandate of the Mission and the Force Intervention Brigade for one year until 20 December 2021.[102] The Council reiterated MONUSCO's strategic priorities, mandating it to focus on protecting civilians and supporting the stabilization and the strengthening of State

[99] Letter dated 2 June 2020 from the Group of Experts on the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/482).
[100] Resolution 2528 (2020), paras. 1 and 3. For more information on the mandate of the Committee and the Group of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.B.
[101] See S/2020/987.
[102] Resolution 2556 (2020), para. 22.

institutions and key governance and security reforms.[103] The Council also authorized MONUSCO to take all necessary measures to carry out its mandate and requested the Secretary-General to immediately inform the Security Council should MONUSCO fail to do so.[104] The Council further emphasized the importance of maintaining international support and engagement to respond rapidly to infectious disease outbreaks including Ebola and COVID-19.[105] The Council endorsed the Joint Strategy on the Progressive and Phased Drawdown of MONUSCO and the broad parameters of MONUSCO's transition.[106] Furthermore, it requested the Secretary-General to present to the Council no later than September 2021 a transition plan on the basis of the Joint Strategy defining the practical modalities of the transfer of tasks to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Country Team and other stakeholders.[107] In explaining the abstention, the permanent mission of the Russian Federation submitted that it could not agree with the new wording of the paragraphs on international humanitarian assistance proposed by the authors of the draft resolution, which diluted the relevant United Nations guiding principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182. The statement further added that the guiding principles captured the imperative to ensure respect for the sovereignty of States recipients of humanitarian aid, which needed to be duly reflected in documents of the Security Council.[108]

Table 1
Meetings: The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Meeting and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8778 7 December 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization		Democratic Republic of the Congo	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization	All invitees and 12 Council members[b] all invitees	

[103] Ibid., para. 24. For more information concerning the mandate of MONUSCO, see part X, sect. I. For further information on past mandates of MONUSCO, see previous Supplements covering the period 2010-2019.
[104] Resolution 2556 (2020), para. 27. For further information concerning the decisions of the Council relating to Article 42 of the Charter, see part VII, sect. IV.A.
[105] Resolution 2556 (2020), para. 37.
[106] Ibid., para. 49.
[107] Ibid., para. 50.
[108] See S/2020/1265.

	Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2020/1150)	Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [a]

[a] The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo participated in the meeting via videoconference.
[b] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

Table 2
Videoconferences: The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
25 June 2020	S/2020/598	Letter dated 29 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
25 June 2020	S/2020/601	Letter dated 26 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2528 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/589 (record of written procedure)
6 October 2020	S/2020/987	Letter dated 8 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
18 December 2020	S/2020/1265	Letter dated 19 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2556 (2020) 14-0-1[a] (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/1253 (record of written procedure)

[a] For: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; Against: None; Abstaining: Russian Federation.

5. The situation in the Central African Republic

During the period under review, the Security Council held five meetings and adopted three resolutions, all under Chapter VII of the Charter, in connection with the situation in the Central African Republic. Three of the meetings were convened to adopt a decision of the Council and the remaining two took the form of briefings.[109] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. In 2020, Council members also held one open videoconference.[110] In addition to meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole.[111] The Council also held one closed videoconference with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).[112] More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below.

During 2020, the Council heard three briefings on the reports by the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic,[113] consistent with the four-month reporting schedule established by resolution 2387 (2017). Two of those briefings were delivered by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA at meetings of the Council and one briefing was delivered by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations at an open videoconference. The Council was also briefed by the Chair of the Central African Republic Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, the African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic, and the Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

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[109] For more information on format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[110] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[111] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 32.
[112] Council members held a closed videoconference on 4 November 2020 in connection with 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"; see A/75/2, part II, chap. 22.
[113] See S/2020/124; S/2020/545; and S/2020/994.

The briefings focused on the political, security, economic and humanitarian situation in the country, particularly the developments after the signing of the Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic on 6 February 2019, the issue of the upcoming presidential and legislative elections in 2020 and 2021 and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, in the light of the first anniversary of the Peace Agreement, in his briefing to the Council on 20 February 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA stressed that the inclusive Government that had emerged from the Agreement remained valid and operational and that the signatory parties had reaffirmed their commitment to it, notwithstanding numerous difficulties, including the continued violations of the Agreement by some armed groups. He commended the progress made in connection with reduction of violence against civilians, extension of State authority, the establishment of the special mixed security units, as provided for by the Peace Agreement, and the fight against impunity and promotion of transitional justice.[114]

At the same meeting, both the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and the African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic outlined the areas of progress and remaining challenges in the country. In terms of progress, both briefers highlighted the gradual return of State authority in the country, the ongoing dialogue between the Government and different stakeholders and the formation of special mixed security units. Among the challenges still facing the country, the two briefers emphasized the continued violence and clashes between the different armed groups, shortcomings in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the need to step up the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process.[115] The Head of the Delegation of the European Union further elaborated on its role in the country, particularly its significant support for the upcoming elections.[116] Taking note of the concerning security and humanitarian situation in Birao, Ndélé and Bria, the African Union Special Representative stressed that the implementation of all aspects of the Peace Agreement, was the best political framework for

[114] See S/PV.8728.
[115] Ibid., Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations and African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic.
[116] Ibid.

stabilizing the situation in the Central African Republic. He added that it was for that reason that the National Assembly had opened an extraordinary session on 19 February 2020 to review and adopt the draft texts envisioned in the Peace Agreement. The Chair of the Central African Republic Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission briefed Council members on his visit to Bangui from 11 to 14 February 2020,[117] focusing on the elections, the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan. He also welcomed the verdict of the Bangui Court of Appeal, condemning the Bangassou militiamen for their abuses against the civilian population and United Nations Blue Helmets and said that the Special Criminal Court was pursuing its investigations with the aim of starting trials in early 2021, but was still facing difficulties with recruitment and funding.[118]

On 22 June 2020, Council members held a videoconference at which they were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security and the Managing Director for Africa of the European Union External Action Service. During the videoconference, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations recalled that the political situation was marked by increased mobilization towards the upcoming elections, challenging legal framework and political tensions. He reported that the security situation remained volatile and despite some progress regarding the implementation of the Peace Agreement, most notably the adoption of legislation as stipulated therein, some armed groups, including the signatories, continued to use violence for expansionist aims.[119] The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security informed Council members that three months after its suspension due to COVID-19, the executive monitoring committee of the Peace Agreement had been able to hold its session in May, and general consensus was that significant progress had been made in particular in the adoption and enactment of all the laws provided for in the Agreement. He also reported on the deployment of the first group of African Union military observers in Bangui.[120] The Managing Director for Africa of the European Union External

[117] For a detailed report from the visit, see letter dated 20 February 2020 from the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/131).
[118] See S/PV.8728.
[119] See S/2020/572.
[120] Ibid.

Action Service briefed on the assistance by the European Union to the electoral process in the Central African Republic.

On 17 October 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General briefed the Council on the progress 20 months after the signing of the Agreement in the areas of political reform, the restoration of State authority and transitional justice. He also focused on the electoral assistance provided by MINUSCA and international actors and reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the socioeconomic vulnerabilities of the Central African Republic. He underscored that despite the negative impact on the operations of MINUSCA, the Mission had been able to continue to implement its mandate and support the authorities in the fight against COVID-19, in particular through logistical and material assistance. He also welcomed the establishment of the new European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic to support the country's security sector reform, which would strengthen the work of MINUSCA.[121] The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security welcomed the fact that he would be meeting with the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the President of the ECCAS Commission and, potentially, the Vice-President of the European Commission to support the Government and other stakeholders from the Central African Republic to assist the country on its path towards peace and development.[122]

Throughout 2020, Council members continued to discuss the critical factors for the successful implementation of the Peace Agreement, including the political support by the Council, regional actors, and the international community. Council members also addressed issues relating to the holding of free, peaceful and inclusive elections in 2020 and 2021, including the support of MINUSCA and regional organizations in that regard, as well as the role of sanctions, particularly the establishment of key benchmarks to serve as a road map that could lead to the easing of the arms embargo.[123] In 2020, Council members also addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate and the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation in the country.

[121] See S/PV.8771.
[122] Ibid.
[123] For further details on the discussion, see part II, sect. III. B.

During the period under review, the Council adopted three resolutions under this item, two in connection with the sanctions measures regarding the Central African Republic and one relating to the mandate of MINUSCA.

With respect to the sanctions measures, the Council expanded the list of exemptions to the arms embargo twice during the reporting period.[124] Firstly, by resolution 2507 (2020) adopted on 31 January 2020, the Council expanded the list of items exempted to include provisions of unarmed ground military vehicles and ground military vehicles mounted with weapons with a calibre of 14.5 mm or less and ammunition specially designed for such weapons.[125] Secondly, by resolution 2536 (2020), adopted on 28 July 2020, the Council added to the list of exemptions rocket propelled grenades, supplied to the Central African Republic security forces, including state civilian law enforcement institutions, and intended solely for support of or use in the Central African Republic process of security sector reform.[126] The Council also renewed twice the provisions on the asset freeze and travel ban measures, as set out in resolution 2399 (2018).[127] The Council continued to monitor the progress achieved by the authorities of the Central African Republic on the key benchmarks enumerated in the presidential statement of 9 April 2019.[128] In that regard, stressing the importance of the authorities achieving the key benchmarks in order to contribute to the advancement of the security sector reform, the disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation processes and necessary weapons and ammunition management reforms, the Council continued to request the Central African Republic authorities to report to the Committee on the progress achieved in that regard.[129] The Council further requested the Secretary-General, in close consultation with MINUSCA, including the United Nations Mine Action Service, and the Panel of Experts, to conduct assessments on the progress achieved by the authorities on the key benchmarks.[130]

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[124] For more information on the sanctions measures concerning the Central African Republic, see part VII, sect. III. For information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.
[125] Resolution 2507 (2020), para 1(g).
[126] Resolution 2536 (2020), para. 1(g).
[127] Resolutions 2507 (2020), para 4; and 2536 (2020), para. 4.
[128] S/PRST/2019/3, seventh paragraph.
[129] Resolutions 2507 (2020), para. 12; and 2536 (2020), fourth preambular paragraph and para. 12.
[130] Resolutions 2507 (2020), para. 13; and 2536 (2020), para. 13.

Further to the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020) on 31 January 2020, the representatives of China and the Russian Federation, in explaining their abstention on the vote, expressed regret that the appeals of the Central African Republic and others for the easing or lifting of the arms embargo had not been considered.[131] The representative of the Russian Federation further noted that the arms embargo on the Central African Republic may have played a positive role in the early stages, but that it was then effectively an obstacle to the rearming of the national army and security forces — the very institutions that bore the primary responsibility for upholding the peace and security of their own citizens.[132] The representative of France, as the penholder, emphasized that the Council was always ready to listen to the legitimate concerns of the Central African Republic, underlining that in order to help equip and strengthen the mobility and security of the Central African forces, from September 2019 to the date of the adoption, the Council had twice authorized a significant easing of the arms embargo. The representative of Niger stated that the adoption of the resolution was indeed a response to the legitimate request of the authorities of the Central African Republic to pursue the definitive lifting of the arms embargo on the basis of progress made in the area of storing and preventing the diversion of weapons. The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, while taking note of the Central African Republic's calls for a complete lifting of the arms component of the sanctions measures and recognizing some merit to that request, primarily as it related to enabling the security forces to reclaim territory from armed groups, did not believe that the time was ripe for a complete lifting of arms measures, as there still remained some shortcomings with weapons and ammunition management in the country. Joined by several other speakers, she recognized the commitment by the Central African Republic to achieving progress on the key benchmarks.[133] Some Council members expressed regret that the Council had been unable to reach consensus on the issue and had failed to adopt the resolution unanimously.[134]

On 28 July 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2536 (2020). Further to the vote, the representative of France, as the penholder on the resolution, welcomed the unity of the

[131] See S/PV.8712, China and Russian Federation.
[132] Ibid.
[133] Ibid., Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Germany, Estonia, Indonesia, China and United Kingdom.
[134] Ibid., France, Estonia and United Kingdom.

Council on the issue of sanctions measures concerning the Central African Republic and affirmed that the Council remained attentive to the legitimate concerns of the Government.[135] The representative of the United States, speaking on behalf of Belgium, Estonia, Germany and the United States, expressed concern that without better management and tracking of the weapons brought into the country, changes in the sanctions regime would significantly increase the risk of the proliferation of rocket-propelled grenades, both within the Central African Republic and the region. He further expressed support for the 12-month extension of the sanctions measures, which they agreed would allow the Government sufficient time to achieve progress on the key benchmarks.[136] The representative of the United Kingdom also expressed concern regarding the further easing of the arms embargo contained in the resolution. The representative of the Russian Federation, while acknowledging that the simplified procedure for supplying grenade launchers to address the needs of the Central African Republic was another small step in support of the Central African people, recalled the demands of the country for lifting of the restrictive sanctions regime, adding that it acted as an obstacle to the rearming of the Central African Republic national army.

During the period under review, the Council extended the mandate of MINUSCA once for a period of one year until 15 November 2021.[137] By resolution 2552 (2020), unanimously adopted on 12 November 2020, the Council welcomed the progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement as well as the work carried out by MINUSCA.[138] The Council reiterated MINUSCA's priority tasks concerning the protection of civilians and United Nations personnel, the support to the peace process, electoral assistance and humanitarian assistance.[139] The Council also specifically requested MINUSCA to contribute to alleviating the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.[140] The Council reiterated all of the remaining tasks of MINUSCA bearing in mind that these tasks as well as the priority tasks were mutually reinforcing.[141] The Council

[135] See S/PV.8750.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Resolution 2552 (2020), para. 26.
[138] Resolution 2552 (2020), seventh and eleventh preambular paragraphs.
[139] Ibid., para. 31. For more information on the mandate of MINUSCA, see part X, sect. I.
[140] Resolution 2552 (2020), para. 31 (d).
[141] Ibid., paras. 32-33.

recalled its resolution 2532 (2020) demanding a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and calling upon all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause for at least 90 consecutive days, in order to enable the safe, timely, unhindered and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.[142]

[142] Ibid., seventeenth preambular paragraph.

Table 1
Meetings: the situation in the Central African Republic

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8712 31 January 2020	Letter dated 6 December 2019 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2454 (2019) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/930)	Draft resolution submitted by France (S/2020/79)	Central African Republic		13 Council members[a], invitee	Resolution 2507 (2020) 13-0-2[b] (adopted under Chapter VII)
S/PV.8728 20 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2020/124)		Central African Republic	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	One Council member (Niger)[c], Four invitees[d]	
S/PV.8750 28 July 2020	Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2507 (2020) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/662)	Draft resolution submitted by France (S/2020/738)			Seven Council members[e]	Resolution 2536 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII)
S/PV.8771 19 October 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African			Special Representative of the Secretary-General, African Union	12 Council members[f], all invitees	

	Republic (S/2020/994)			Commissioner for Peace and Security, Managing Director for Africa, European External Action Service	
S/PV.8776 12 November 2020	Draft resolution submitted by France (S/2020/1106)	Central African Republic		Two Council members (Indonesia, Russian Federation)	Resolution 2552 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII)

[a] The representatives of South Africa and Tunisia did not make statements. The representative of Niger spoke on behalf of South Africa and Tunisia.

[b] *For*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam. *Against*: None. *Abstaining*: China, Russian Federation.

[c] The representative of Niger spoke on behalf of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia.

[d] The African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic joined via video-teleconference from Khartoum. The representative of the Central African Republic did not make a statement.

[e] China, Dominican Republic, France, Niger, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States. The representative of the United States made a statement on behalf of Belgium, Estonia and Germany.

[f] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

Table 2
Videoconferences: the situation in the Central African Republic

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
22 June 2020	S/2020/572	Letter dated 24 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

6. The situation in Guinea-Bissau

During the period under review, the Security Council held three meetings and adopted one resolution in connection with the situation in Guinea-Bissau. One meeting was convened for the adoption of a decision, while two meetings took the form of briefings.[143] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below. In addition to these meetings, in 2020, Council members also held informal consultations of the whole to discuss the situation in Guinea Bissau.[144]

In February 2020, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea Bissau (UNIOGBIS).[145] She commended Guinea-Bissau for the completion of its electoral cycle despite the challenges facing the outcome of the presidential election. She also commended state institutions resorting to legal means to resolve political disputes in connection with the presidential election results, with no military interference and no major human rights violations. She noted that there was progress in the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, referring to the national action plan on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime as a roadmap. She referred to the three-phase transition and drawdown of UNIOGBIS in line with resolution 2458 (2019) by 31 December 2020 and mentioned that with the conclusion of the electoral cycle, the Mission had shifted its efforts towards supporting a reform agenda, as envisioned in the Conakry Agreement and the Stability Pact.

At the same meeting, the Council heard a briefing by the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.[146] He congratulated Guinea-Bissau on the successful legislative and presidential elections in 2019, while acknowledging the legal challenges of the election results. He discussed the continued drawdown of the Mission, highlighting that the role of the United Nations would be to ensure a coherent and coordinated approach in support of nationally led efforts to take forward policies and programmes to address

[143] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.A.
[144] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 15.
[145] See S/PV.8724, pp. 2-4.
[146] Ibid., pp. 5-6.

the root causes of instability and promote peace and development. He also stated that it would be important for the international community to continue to help the Government to strengthen democratic and inclusive institutions to assist in internal reforms, support the engagement of women and youth in peacebuilding and promote and protect human rights. He affirmed that the Peacebuilding Commission was prepared to assist UNIOGBIS and the Government of Guinea-Bissau by providing a platform for coherence and coordination among stakeholders, as well as for the promotion of shared analysis and understanding of the multidimensional peacebuilding challenges in the country. During the discussion, most Council members commended the progress achieved and many of them pledged their commitment to future initiatives, including support for the drawdown of UNIOGBIS.[147] Most Council members cautioned about the risks posed by the lack of political stability which could lead to a deterioration of the security situation, as well as the issue of drug trafficking and transnational organized crime, which continued to pose a serious threat to the stability of the country. Council members also emphasized the importance of bilateral and multilateral partners in implementing the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS six-point road map.[148] In light of the changing circumstances in the country and the drawdown of UNIOGBIS, some Council members also addressed the possible lifting or adjusting of the sanctions against Guinea-Bissau,[149] while others supported the maintenance of the sanctions.[150]

The issues outlined above were also addressed by the Council in a decision adopted on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. On 28 February 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2512 (2020), extending the mandate of UNIOGBIS for 10 months, until 31 December 2020.[151] In the resolution, the Council endorsed the reprioritization of tasks and reconfiguration of UNIOGBIS for its phased drawdown.[152] The Council requested the Mission to continue to focus on supporting the full implementation of the Conakry Agreement and the ECOWAS

[147] Ibid., Germany, France, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, China, South Africa, Estonia and Viet Nam.
[148] Ibid., Niger, France, China, South Africa, Viet Nam and United Kingdom.
[149] Ibid., Russian Federation and Belgium.
[150] Ibid., Niger.
[151] Resolution 2512 (2020), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of UNIOGBIS, see part X, sect. II.
[152] Resolution 2512 (2020), paras. 2(a), (b).

Roadmap and to facilitate an inclusive political dialogue and national reconciliation process.[153] The Council also requested the Secretary-General to start liquidation of UNIOGBIS immediately following the mandate completion date of 31 December 2020, once all substantive staff had left the Mission, and end the liquidation process no later than 28 February 2021.[154] Pursuant to resolution 2512 (2020), the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a report to the Security Council within five months of the adoption of the resolution on the implementation of the resolution and the drawdown and transition of UNIOGBIS, as well as to the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2048 (2012) on the progress made regarding the stabilization of Guinea-Bissau and the restoration of constitutional order and giving recommendations on the sanctions regime, including, but not limited to, its continuation, adjustment or suspension.[155] The Council also decided to review the sanctions measures established six months from the adoption of the resolution.[156] Further to the vote on the resolution, certain Council members expressed differing views on the continuation of the sanctions concerning Guinea Bissau.[157]

On 10 August 2020, the Council heard the second briefing by Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNIOGBIS.[158] She reported that there had been increasing human rights abuses and political instability between the opposing political parties since her previous briefing. She addressed the particular fragility of Guinea-Bissau and the COVID-19 pandemic due to the country's health infrastructure and limited resources while highlighting the existence of a national response plan to the pandemic, led by the Resident Coordinator, together with the World Health Organization, the World Bank and other United Nations agencies. She also stated that the phased closure for UNIOGBIS, including the transition and the reconfiguration of the United Nations presence were still proceeding. However, the political crisis and parliamentary paralysis that emerged following the presidential election prevented the Mission from supporting the urgent reforms outlined in the Conakry Agreement, including the

[153] Ibid., para. 4(a).
[154] Ibid., para. 8.
[155] Ibid., para, 25. For further information on the sanctions measures concerning Guinea Bissau, see part VII, sect. III.
[156] Resolution 2512 (2020), para. 26.
[157] See S/PV.8736, Niger and Russian Federation.
[158] See S/PV. 8754, pp. 3-6.

review of the Constitution, the electoral law and the law on political parties. She, therefore, stated that regretfully the mandate of UNIOGBIS was unlikely to be fully implemented before the Mission's departure. She reiterated her plea to Council members for funding as essential to avoid "a financial cliff" and appealed to the Council and to the international community to generously support the Cooperation Framework. She also made reference to the tripartite coordination meetings between UNIOGBIS, ECOWAS and UNOWAS to accompany the transition process and added that the continued role of the Peacebuilding Commission in maintaining the international community's attention on Guinea-Bissau would be of utmost importance following the departure of UNIOGBIS. The Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission also briefed the Council, noting that despite the progress, the challenges to stability and development had deepened with the arrival of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic during a year of three transitions — first, the drawdown of UNIOGBIS and transfer of tasks to the United Nations country team; secondly, the country's transition to new political leadership, which had not been uneventful; and, thirdly, the closure of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau. He affirmed that continued international engagement and sustained focus on the country's peacebuilding priorities would be critical to ensuring economic recovery and sustainable development in Guinea-Bissau.[159] The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) affirmed that urgently coordinated action based on shared responsibility was very much needed. Echoing the report of the Secretary-General,[160] he stated that tackling transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking and trafficking in persons, was critical to building peace and working towards lasting political and economic stability in Guinea-Bissau.[161] Most Council members agreed that the situation in Guinea-Bissau remained fragile, and some expressed concern over the political crisis,[162] the violations of human rights,[163] and the possible resurgence of drug trafficking and

[159] Ibid.
[160] See S/2020/755.
[161] See S/PV. 8754, pp. 6-7.
[162] Ibid., Germany, Estonia, France, United Kingdom and Indonesia.
[163] Ibid., Germany, Estonia, United States, Dominican Republic, Belgium and United Kingdom.

organized crime.[164] Many Council members called for action towards stability and the implementation of the Conakry Agreement, the six-point ECOWAS road map and a revision of the Constitution.[165] Some Council members questioned the need for the maintenance of sanctions measures, arguing that the situation in the country had changed since the coup d'état that took place in 2012,[166] while others stated that the political and military personnel involvement in drug trafficking and organized crime needed to be followed up and borne in mind when discussing the future of the sanctions measures.[167]

Meetings: The situation in Guinea-Bissau

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining*
S/PV.8724 14 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/105)		Guinea-Bissau	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	All Council members[a], all invitees	
S/PV.8736 28 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on Developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/105)				Two Council members (Niger, Russian Federation)	Resolution 2512 (2020) 15-0-0

[164] Ibid., Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Viet Nam, and Indonesia.
[165] Ibid., Russian Federation, Germany, France, China, Belgium and Viet Nam.
[166] Ibid., Russian Federation.
[167] Ibid., Germany.

S/PV.8754 10 August 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on developments in Guinea-Bissau and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (S/2020/755)	Guinea-Bissau	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC), Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations on behalf of the Chair of the Guinea-Bissau Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission	Twelve Council members[b] all invitees[c]

[a.] Niger was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad of the Niger.
[b] The representative of the Niger spoke also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[c] The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Executive Director of UNDOC participated in the meeting via video-teleconference from Bissau and Vienna, respectively.

7. Central African region

During the period under review, the Council held a total of two open videoconferences in connection with the Central African region.[168] The Council considered developments in Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel. More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below.

During the period under review, consistent with the six-months reporting period requested by the presidential statement of 10 August 2018,[169] the Council heard two briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), further to the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Region.[170] The Special Representative apprised the Council on the activities of UNOCA, its continued cooperation with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), and its activities as the Secretariat for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (UNSAC). The Special Representative updated the Council on the human rights and security situation in the region, including the continued threats posed by terrorism and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, as well as the impact of climate change on the security and prosperity of Central African countries. Throughout 2020, the Special Representative also briefed the Council on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, particularly the negative socioeconomic effects of the pandemic and the efforts of countries in the region, UNOCA and regional organizations to combat the threats posed by the disease.

On 12 June 2020, the Special Representative recalled that a major consequence of the pandemic was the economic crisis. He noted, however, that Central Africa's governments and regional institutions had been able to adapt to the new crisis context and ensure the continuity of

[168] See S/2020/542 and S/2020/1188.
[169] S/PRST/2018/17, last paragraph.
[170] See S/2020/463 and S/2020/1154.

certain crucial activities. In that regard, he briefed the Council on the extraordinary ECCAS ministerial meeting held on 3 and 4 June 2020, which resulted in the adoption of the four axes of a regional response strategy to combat COVID-19, namely, preventing the spread of the virus; limiting the death rate and managing positive cases; addressing the socioeconomic and security impact of COVID-19; and responding to the cross-border security issues created by the pandemic. Regarding political and security developments in the region, in addition to briefing the Council members on specific situations in each of the countries of the region, the Special Representative strongly condemned the deliberate attacks on civilians and the destruction of private property and public infrastructure by terrorist and armed groups, and welcomed the mobilization of the armies of Cameroon and Chad, including within the framework of the Multinational Joint Task Force, to fight terrorism in the Lake Chad basin. He informed the Council that Operation Wrath of Boma, launched by the Chadian army between late March and early April 2020, seemed to have considerably weakened Boko Haram. He also updated the Council on the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) which, although also weakened, continued to kill and abduct civilians, and called on regional actors, including the African Union and ECCAS, as well as international partners, to strengthen their cooperation and mobilize the resources necessary to defeat the LRA, within the framework of the United Nations Regional Strategy to Address the Threat and Impact of the Activities of the Lord's Resistance Army.[171]

On 9 December 2020, the Special Representative reported to the Council that the pandemic seemed generally under control in the subregion, indicating that the early measures enforced by the governments of the subregion to contain and reduce the spread of the pandemic had proven effective. He noted, however, that this effectiveness came at a high socioeconomic cost, as the economic slowdown triggered by the pandemic and the different restrictive measures had further depleted the already limited capacity of States to provide basic social services to their populations. Regarding political developments in the region, the Special Representative updated the Council on the preparations for the holding of elections in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Sao Tome and Principe, as well as on other political developments in the region, including the implementation of a special status for the

[171] See S/2020/542.

North-West and South-West regions in Cameroon, political consultations to discuss preparations for the 2021 presidential election in the Republic of the Congo, and votes on the amendments to the Constitution in Chad. Regarding the security situation, the Special Representative recalled with great concern the violence in the Far North, North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon, the increase in attacks and kidnappings by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad basin and the intensification of attacks by terrorist groups in Cameroon and Chad. He also addressed the issue of transhumance in Central Africa and the increase in maritime organized crime in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly drug trafficking, trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants, stressing in that regard the need for coordination between Central and West Africa through existing mechanisms, such as the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa and the Regional Centre for Maritime Security in West Africa, to effectively respond to threats. The Special Representative also briefed the Council on his engagements with key United Nations, national and international partners in the subregion on various issues, including during his recent visits to Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo and the meeting of the Heads of United Nations presences in Central Africa on strengthening coordination in supporting regional efforts to address the impact of climate change, prevent election-related violence and fight against hate speech.[172]

In 2020, the Council's deliberations focused on major political and security developments, as well as on the humanitarian, human rights and socio-economic challenges affecting the Central African region, including those resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. On the political front, several Council members specifically addressed the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the issue of elections in the country scheduled for 2020/2021.[173] Council members also discussed the national dialogue in Cameroon and the steps taken by the Cameroonian government to implement the recommendations of the October 2019 Major National Dialogue, including the

[172] See S/2020/1188.
[173] See S/2020/542, France, Russian Federation, and United Kingdom; S/2020/1188, Estonia, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States.

passing of legislation granting special status to the North-West and South-West regions.[174] Some Council members welcomed the efforts aimed at improving relations among Central African States, particularly those of Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ease tensions and strengthen relations between the countries of the Great Lakes region.[175]

Concerning the security situation, deliberations focused on the continued security threats posed by Boko Haram and the LRA to the Central African region and beyond,[176] maritime organized crime and piracy in the Gulf of Guinea,[177] as well as tensions in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon.[178] Some Council members also addressed the adverse effects of climate change on security in the region.[179] With respect to the humanitarian, socio-economic and human rights challenges, Council members focused on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the livelihoods of Central African populations and the security in the region as well as the work of UNOCA. The Council also continued to address the adverse effects of climate change on the populations of Central Africa and the region's geopolitical situation. Some Council members acknowledged that the effects of climate change had triggered displacement and negatively impacted the efforts to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic,[180] and some

[174] S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and United Kingdom; S/2020/1188, Belgium, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and United Kingdom.
[175] See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and Viet Nam; S/2020/1188, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and Viet Nam.
[176] See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, France, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and Viet Nam; S/2020/1188, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and Viet Nam.
[177] See S/2020/542, France, and Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); S/2020/1188, China, France, Russian Federation, and Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[178] See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and United States; S/2020/1188, Dominican Republic, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, and Viet Nam.
[179] See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and Viet Nam; S/2020/1188, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and United Kingdom.
[180] See S/2020/542, Dominican Republic and Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

discussed the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad basin, including malnutrition, spread of diseases and displacement of thousands of people into neighbouring countries.[181]

In addition, in 2020, Council members continued to focus on the role of UNOCA and its cooperation with the African Union, ECCAS and other international, regional and subregional organizations and United Nations regional offices in resolving conflicts, addressing the humanitarian and human rights challenges and responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in the region.

Videoconferences: Central African region

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
12 June 2020	S/2020/542	Letter dated 16 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
9 December 2020	S/2020/1188	Letter dated 14 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[181] See S/2020/542, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and United Kingdom; S/2020/1188, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Viet Nam.

8. Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

During the period under review, the Security Council held six meetings in connection with the item entitled "Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan". Three of the meetings took the form of briefings and three were convened for the adoption of a decision.[182] In addition, Council members held eighteen videoconferences and adopted ten resolutions under this item.[183] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and decisions, as well as the videoconferences is given in the tables below. In addition to meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole and an informal interactive dialogue in connection with this item.[184] The Council also held one closed meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) pursuant to 1353 (2001).[185]

Consistent with prior practice, the Council considered several distinct topics under this item, namely the situation in the Sudan and the mandates of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the newly established United Nations Integrated Transition Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS); bilateral relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, the situation in the Abyei Area and the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA); and the situation in South Sudan and the mandate of UNMISS.[186] The Council also discussed the work of the Committees and Panels of Experts concerning the Sudan and South Sudan, as well as the implementation of resolution 1593 (2005), by which the

[182] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[183] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[184] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 27. See also, S/2020/258 and S/2020/344.
[185] Held on 3 March 2020 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 – South Sudan", see S/PV.8740.
[186] For more information on the mandates of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan, and the United Nations Integrated Transition Mission in the Sudan, see part X.

Council had referred the situation in Darfur to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court.[187]

In relation to the Sudan, Council members were briefed three times by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and once by the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support.[188]

In her briefing at the first open videoconference held on 28 April 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs stated that, six months after the establishment of the transition, the Sudan continued to face significant challenges including political fragility, difficult humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions, and a risk of the wider spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.[189]

In subsequent videoconferences, the Under-Secretary-General added that the humanitarian situation was aggravated by severe flooding, intercommunal violence, prolonged displacement, and the arrival of over 48,000 people fleeing the conflict in the Tigray region of Ethiopia. She called on the international community to continue supporting the Sudan's economic recovery and welcomed the intention of the United States to rescind the country's designation as a State sponsor of terrorism, which would facilitate access to critical international financial assistance. Regarding the peace process, the Under-Secretary-General noted the signing of the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan between the transitional Government of the Sudan, the Sudan Revolutionary Front alliance and the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi on 3 October 2020. The agreement provided for a 39-month transition and the membership and participation of the signatories in the Sovereign Council, the transitional Government, and the Transitional Legislative Council, as well as the establishment of an advisory Council of Partners for the Transitional Period. The Under-Secretary-General called on all parties to ensure the functioning of clearly defined institutions that were inclusive and effective. In addition, she

[187] For more information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan and their respective Panels of Experts, see part IX, sect. I. B.
[188] See S/2020/336, S/PV.8761 and S/2020/1183.
[189] See S/2020/336.

noted that women remained underrepresented in transitional structures, with only three women among the cabinet's 18 ministers and one representative in the Council of Partners.[190]

Following the establishment of UNITAMS on 3 June 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs informed Council members that the Mission would, in accordance with its mandate, focus on four objectives, namely assisting the political transition; supporting peace processes; bolstering peacebuilding, civilian protection and the rule of law; and promoting the mobilization of economic, development and humanitarian assistance.[191] She welcomed the steps taken by the transitional Government to ensure the protection of civilians in Darfur, including through the formulation of the national plan for civilian protection. The effective protection of civilians, however, would only be achieved through key efforts such as the implementation of the Juba Agreement, which was a major step towards ending years of conflict, addressing the root causes and building sustainable peace.[192]

In his briefings, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations stressed the need to translate the Juba Agreement into a single and unfractured vision for the future of the Sudan, bring all stakeholders on board, create the joint security forces, and secure sufficient international support.[193] Regarding the security situation in Darfur, intercommunal fighting in late 2019 and early 2020 left 65 people dead, 46,000 internally displaced, and 11,000 as refugees in Chad.[194] There was also a spike in clashes involving elements of the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid and a continuation of attacks against internally displaced persons and protestors. The Under-Secretary-General welcomed and expressed support for the commitment of the transitional Government to assume responsibility for the protection of civilians in Darfur and noted the beginning of the deployment of a Sudanese civilian protection force.[195]

In connection with the drawdown of UNAMID, at the open videoconference held on 24 April 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations informed Council members that the transitional Government's emergency restrictions in response to the pandemic, coupled with

[190] See S/2020/1183.
[191] See S/PV.8761.
[192] See S/2020/1183.
[193] See S/PV.8761.
[194] See S/2020/336.
[195] See S/2020/1183.

the suspension of United Nations peacekeeping rotations, had a severe impact on the ability of UNAMID to implement its mandate and rendered the scheduled drawdown and liquidation plan by the end of the Mission's mandate on 31 October 2020 unrealistic.[196] On 8 December 2020, he noted that further to discussions between the African Union, United Nations and the Sudan, within the framework of the Tripartite Coordination Mechanism, it was recommended to terminate UNAMID by 31 December 2020, followed by a six-month period of drawdown and liquidation. Noting that the process would be a major undertaking, he underscored the need for coordination of international support for the transitional Government and the parties to the Juba Agreement, for the transition to UNITAMS to consolidate the gains made in peacebuilding, and for coordinated political advocacy to support an orderly and safe drawdown and closure of the Mission's team sites.[197]

During the open videoconference held on 8 December 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support brought to the attention of Council members key operational aspects and challenges to the expected drawdown and closure of UNAMID and the start-up of UNITAMS. The orderly and safe drawdown of the personnel of a mission of the size of UNAMID would take no less than six months, followed by a nine-to-twelve-month period of asset disposal and liquidation with the ongoing full cooperation of the transitional Government and local authorities. Moreover, a streamlined coordination mechanism with the Government would provide a basis for addressing challenges in the drawdown, while the leadership of remaining United Nations personnel and the full cooperation of troop- and police-contributing countries was also important for a safe and orderly drawdown and handover of programmatic responsibilities to UNITAMS.[198]

In their discussions during the meeting and videoconferences, Council members welcomed the progress made in the political transition, particularly with the signing of the Juba Agreement. They expressed concern about the humanitarian and socioeconomic situation in the Sudan, including the potential impact of the pandemic and the arrival of refugees from Ethiopia, and underscored the need for increased international financial support to the country. Several

[196] See S/2020/336.
[197] See S/2020/1183.
[198] Ibid.

Council members called for the lifting of sanctions measures imposed against the Sudan.[199] Some Council members expressed concern about the increase in intercommunal violence in Darfur and called on the transitional Government to ensure the protection of civilians.[200] Council members stressed the importance of a responsible and orderly drawdown and closure of UNAMID which took into account the situation on the ground[201] and ensured close coordination with the transitional Government.[202] Moreover, Council members also addressed the mandate and objectives of UNITAMS, with particular emphasis on the Mission's support for the Government's priorities during the transitional period[203] and the strengthening of the Sudan's protection of civilians capacities.[204]

Concerning UNAMID, the Council unanimously adopted resolutions 2517 (2020), 2523 (2020) and 2525 (2020), acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, maintaining the Mission's authorized troop and police ceiling and extending the timelines for its decision on the courses of action regarding the drawdown and exit .[205] Moreover, resolution 2525 (2020) of 3 June 2020 extended the mandate of UNAMID for two months from 31 October to 31 December 2020 and modified its priorities to focus on the protection of civilians, including to support the transitional Government's capacity in this regard.[206] On 3 June 2020, the Council also unanimously adopted resolution 2524 (2020) establishing UNITAMS for an initial period of 12 months as a follow-up presence to UNAMID to support the political transition, peace processes between the Government and the armed groups, peacebuilding and the protection of civilians, and the mobilization and coordination of economic and humanitarian assistance.[207]

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[199] See S/2020/336, China, Indonesia, Russian Federation and South Africa; and S/PV.8761, China, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Russian Federation.
[200] See S/2020/336, Estonia and Germany; S/PV.8761, United Kingdom, France and United States; and S/2020/1183, Belgium, United Kingdom and United States.
[201] See S/2020/336, China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, South Africa and Viet Nam; and S/2020/1183, Estonia, France and Niger.
[202] See S/2020/336, China, France, South Africa and Viet Nam; and S/2020/1183, Germany, Indonesia, Niger and Russian Federation.
[203] See S/PV.8761, China and Estonia; and S/2020/1183, China and Estonia.
[204] See S/PV.8761, France, Estonia, Dominican Republic; and S/2020/1183, Belgium, Dominican Republic and Estonia.
[205] Resolutions 2517 (2020), paras. 1 and 2, 2523 (2020), paras. 1 and 2, and 2525 (2020), paras. 1 and 2.
[206] Resolution 2525 (2020), para. 3.
[207] Resolution 2524 (2020), para. 2.

By resolution 2559 (2020) of 22 December 2020, the Council unanimously welcomed the signing of the Juba Peace Agreement on 3 October 2020 and encouraged the signatories to begin swiftly the process of implementation, particularly key provisions pertaining to security arrangements and addressing the root causes of conflict in Darfur and Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile states.[208] The Council decided to terminate the mandate of UNAMID as of 31 December 2020 and requested the Secretary-General to complete withdrawal of all uniformed and civilian personnel by 30 June 2021.[209] The resolution authorized, for the duration of the drawdown and liquidation, the retention of a guard unit within the Mission's existing footprint to protect its personnel, facilities and assets.[210] Furthermore, the resolution urged the transitional Government to fully and swiftly implement the national plan for civilian protection and to protect civilians in Darfur in accordance with international human rights law and international humanitarian law.[211]

In addition to the above and consistent with established practice pursuant to resolution 1593 (2005), the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court briefed Council members twice in 2020 in relation to Darfur.[212] The Prosecutor noted the transfer of the first of five suspects, Ali Kushayb Abd-Al-Rahman, to the Court on 9 June 2020 following his surrender to the authorities in the Central African Republic.[213] With respect to the four remaining suspects, she recalled that the former President of the Sudan, Omar Hassan al-Bashir, was serving a two-year sentence in the Sudan for a conviction relating to financial corruption, Ahmad Harun and Abdel Raheem Hussein were reportedly in the custody of national authorities awaiting criminal charges, while Abdallah Banda remained at large.[214] In October 2020, the Prosecutor led the first mission of her office to the Sudan in 13 years during which she stressed to the transitional Government the need for her investigators to have access to the territory of the Sudan. While fully respecting the principles of complementarity, she underscored to Council members the need to ensure that all

[208] Resolution 2559 (2020), eighth and ninth preambular paragraphs.
[209] Ibid., paras. 1 and 2.
[210] Ibid., para. 3.
[211] Ibid., para. 4. See letter dated 21 May 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Council (S/2020/429).
[212] See S/2020/538 and S/2020/1192.
[213] See S/2020/1192.
[214] See S/2020/538.

suspects were brought to justice through fair, objective and independent proceedings, either before the Court or in the Sudanese courts, guided by the requirements of the Rome Statute.[215]

Council members also heard three briefings by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) on the work of the Committee and its Panel of Experts.[216] The Chair noted that the Panel submitted its interim report for 2020, which stated that the parties in the Sudan continued to transfer arms and other military material into Darfur, in violation of the arms embargo, while the implementation of the travel ban and asset freeze also remained a challenge.[217] Despite the restrictions owing to the pandemic, the Panel conducted its first visit to the Sudan in October and November 2020.[218] By resolution 2508 (2020) of 11 February 2020, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council unanimously renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts for a period of 13 months until 12 March 2021.[219] The Council further expressed its intention to establish clear, well defined, and measurable key benchmarks that could serve in guiding the Council to review measures on the Government of the Sudan.[220]

With respect to the Abyei Area and relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, Council members were briefed twice by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa.[221] In his briefings, the Under-Secretary-General opined that, despite improving relations between the Sudan and South Sudan, it remained very unlikely that progress would be made in determining the final status of the Abyei Area in the short or medium term. Moreover, the situation in Abyei remained volatile with episodes of heightened intercommunal tensions, most notably following the killing of 33 Ngok Dinka by Misseriya armed elements in Kolom on 22 January 2020.[222] There was minimum progress on the implementation of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism benchmarks and the decisions of the Joint Political and Security Mechanism of 19 February 2020 due to the impact of the pandemic, including on the opening of the border crossing corridors,

[215] See S/2020/1192.
[216] See S/2020/528, S/2020/913 and S/2020/1235.
[217] See S/2020/913.
[218] See S/2020/1235.
[219] Resolution 2508 (2020), para. 2.
[220] Ibid., para. 4.
[221] See S/2020/351 and S/PV.8772.
[222] See S/2020/351.

border demarcation, and the Mechanism's operational activities. Furthermore, delays in the issuance of visas for the UNISFA police component, including the formed police units, had a very negative impact on mandate implementation.[223]

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa stated that the Sudan and South Sudan had been consolidating their improved relations, notably through the constructive roles played in each other's peace processes and cooperation on oil management.[224] In this regard, he highlighted the signing of the Juba Agreement and the initiation of bilateral discussions on 6 September 2020 to review the 2012 cooperation agreements, including on the Abyei Area.[225] The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General expressed the hope that the rapprochement and strengthened relations between the two countries would subsequently provide incentives to address the outstanding issues under the cooperation agreements, including Abyei.[226] In their statements in 2020, Council members noted the improvement in relations, with several of them stating that this momentum should be used to resolve outstanding issues related to the Abyei Area and the border.[227] Moreover, noting with concern the impact of restrictions on the ability of UNISFA to implement its mandate, a number of Council members urged the parties to fully support the Mission in the deployment of additional police personnel, the appointment of a civilian deputy head of mission and with the establishment of the Abyei Police Service.[228] Some Council members stressed the importance of considering the views of the parties, the African Union, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and troop-contributing countries with respect to the future mandate of the Mission.[229]

By resolutions 2519 (2020) of 14 May 2020 and 2550 (2020) of 12 November 2020, the Council twice unanimously extended the mandate of UNISFA to support the Border Mechanism

[223] See S/PV.8772.
[224] See S/2020/351.
[225] See S/PV.8772.
[226] See S/2020/351.
[227] See S/2020/351, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United States, Viet Nam; and S/PV.8772, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Germany, Estonia, France and Tunisia,
[228] See S/2020/351, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; and S/PV.8772, United States, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Germany, Estonia, Dominican Republic, France, Tunisia and Belgium.
[229] See S/2020/351, China, Viet Nam; and S/PV.8772, Russian Federation.

and, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, it also extended the Mission's mandate in connection with the Abyei Area, while maintaining its authorized troop and police levels.[230] By resolution 2550 (2020), the Council reiterated its request to the Sudan and South Sudan to demonstrate measurable progress on border demarcation, including with respect to facilitating the work of the Border Mechanism, withdrawing their forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone, and reopening border crossing corridors. The Council requested the Secretary-General to hold joint consultations with the Governments of the Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and relevant stakeholders to develop options no later than 31 March 2021 for the responsible drawdown and exit of UNISFA, including an option that was not limited by the implementation of the 2011 agreements on Abyei.[231]

In connection with the situation in South Sudan, Council members were briefed four times by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS[232] and twice by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator.[233] Council members also heard three briefings from representatives of civil society organizations.[234] In his briefing on 4 March 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported notable progress in the implementation of the 2018 Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan. On 15 February 2020, President Salva Kiir Mayardit agreed to return South Sudan to its pre-2015 position of 10 states, while adding three administrative areas. With that shift, Riek Machar, leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition, accepted the challenge to join the Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity as First Vice-President.[235] With the formation of the Transitional Government, nine out of ten governor positions were filled, the Council of Ministers commenced its meetings, and most national institutions were functioning, at least at a basic level.[236]

[230] Resolutions 2519 (2020), paras. 1, 2 and 3; and 2550 (2020), paras. 1 and 2.
[231] Resolution 2550 (2020), para. 31.
[232] See S/PV.8741, S/2020/582, S/2020/914 and S/2020/1237.
[233] See S/2020/914 and S/2020/1237.
[234] See S/PV.8741, S/2020/582 and S/2020/914.
[235] See S/PV.8741.
[236] See S/2020/1237.

However, the implementation of other aspects of the Revitalized Agreement, according to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, was lagging. Transitional security arrangements aimed at unifying security forces were stalled, leaving combatants in training centres often without adequate food or shelter. The initial hold-up in the appointment of governors and county commissioners left a local vacuum of power and made it difficult to nip in the bud brewing intercommunal violence. Moreover, in 2020, more than 2,000 civilians lost their lives in local-level conflict, which was being weaponized by external actors acting in their own economic or political interests.[237]

With respect to the mandate of UNMISS, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General stated that the political violence of the past had largely subsided despite delays in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement. Given that the external threats that led to the establishment of the protection of civilians sites no longer existed, UNMISS was gradually withdrawing its troops and police from static duties at those areas and redeploying them to hotspots where people were in immediate danger.[238] In his briefing on 15 December 2020, he noted that the Bor, Wau and Juba sites were successfully transitioned to conventional displacement camps and that planning for the same process was underway at Bentiu. Noting the outcome of the independent strategic review of UNMISS, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General observed that the Mission's mandate had to change as circumstances did.[239] In this context, he underscored the importance for UNMISS to continue supporting the political process as its central task, undertake enhanced mobility and increased outreach to protect civilians, and support police capacity-building, preparation for elections, security sector reform, and, ultimately, disarmament and reintegration.[240]

In his statement to the Council on 16 September 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator reported that, despite some encouraging developments since the signing of the Revitalized Agreement and the formation of

[237] Ibid.
[238] See S/2020/914.
[239] See letter dated 15 December 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Council transmitting the report of the independent strategic review of UNMISS (S/2020/1224).
[240] See S/2020/1231.

the Transitional Government, humanitarian needs were again rising due to more violence, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic, which was bringing a host of health and wider consequences, including increasing food insecurity. A total of 7.5 million people needed humanitarian assistance. Violence in 2020 had resulted in hundreds of deaths, another 157,000 people displaced and the abduction of large numbers of women and children. Although 1.1 million displaced people had been able to return, 1.6 million remained in internal displacement and another 2.2 million were refugees in neighbouring countries. Women and girls faced extreme levels of sexual and gender-based violence. The pandemic, along with increased violence in some areas, magnified humanitarian access challenges, while humanitarian workers faced an increase in attacks and a deteriorating operational environment. The Under-Secretary-General sought the support of the Council in continuing to back efforts to find a political solution to end the violence, to use its influence to ensure that humanitarian relief operations were facilitated and aid workers protected, and to provide additional resources for the South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan.[241] In his remarks at the open videoconference held on 15 December 2020, the Under-Secretary-General reported that, according to the global "Integrated Food Security Phase Classification", five counties in Jonglei, Warrap, and Norther Bahr el Ghazal faced "catastrophic" levels of food insecurity, with a sixth county presenting a "famine likely" situation. At nearly $2 billion, the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2020, the largest ever for the country, was only two-third funded, while the needs were expected to be even higher in 2021.[242]

In her statement to the Council at the meeting held on 4 March 2020, the Coordinator of the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan, a national civil society organization, expressed hope that, with the breakthrough in the peace process, the Transitional Government would tackle issues such as the education of girls, child marriage, youth job creation, and basic services for communities. Serious challenges remained, however, with a critical need for humanitarian assistance, extreme risks of rape and other forms of sexual or gender-based violence against women and girls, inadequate conditions for women at unified police training centres, and the need for greater efforts to achieve the 35 per cent quota for

[241] See S/2020/914.
[242] See S/2020/1237.

women in the transitional bodies. She urged the Council to maintain engagement with the parties to ensure the swift implementation of the peace agreement, express support for transitional justice and accountability for gender-based violence, renew the call for the fulfillment of the 35 per cent quota, and ensure that UNMISS consulted a wide range of women's civil society organizations to guide its work in the protection of civilians, confidence-building and mediation.[243]

Briefing Council members on 23 June 2020, the Executive Director of the Community Empowerment for Progress Organization, a South Sudanese civil society organization, stated that the political will to implement the Revitalized Agreement was lacking and noted multiple violations of the cessation of hostilities and the lack of criminal prosecution for violations of human rights and humanitarian law. He urged the Council to insist on the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan and the Compensation and Reparation Authority, pressure the parties to complete the formation of the transitional legislative, local government and transitional justice institutions, and ensure the safety of and access for humanitarian workers. He further urged the Council to support the official launch of the implementation plan on the prevention of sexual violence in accordance with the joint communiqué between South Sudan and the United Nations of December 2014, support the protection of civic space, and ensure that peacekeeping forces increased engagement with communities and enhanced the protection for individuals and communities.[244] On 16 September 2020, the Gender and Social Justice Manager of the Assistance Mission for Africa, a non-governmental organization, briefed Council members on ways of addressing the ongoing intercommunal conflicts in South Sudan and how to achieve the meaningful participation of women in governance and peacebuilding. She urged the Council to hold UNMISS accountable for its mandate to protect civilians and consult with the communities in the protection of civilian's sites to ensure that return, relocation and integration efforts were safe, dignified and voluntary.[245]

In their discussions on South Sudan, Council members welcomed the establishment of the Transitional Government and commended the mediation efforts of the IGAD, the African

[243] See S/PV.8741.
[244] See S/2020/582.
[245] See S/2020/914,.

Union and other partners. Going forward, they called for full respect for the ceasefire and the implementation of the provisions of the Revitalized Agreement concerning security arrangements, the establishment of the Transitional National Legislative Assembly and transitional justice mechanisms, and financial transparency. Council members called on the Government and armed groups to facilitate humanitarian access and to take action to prevent intercommunal violence. Several Council members further called for the meaningful participation of women, youth, civil society and other groups in the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement[246] and for the prevention of and accountability for sexual and gender-based violence and violations against children.[247]

Concerning the decisions on UNMISS, by resolution 2514 (2020) of 12 March 2020, the Council extended the mandate of the Mission for a period of one year until 15 March 2021, introducing some modifications to its tasks while maintaining its overall composition.[248] The Council requested the Secretary-General to conduct an independent strategic review of UNMISS no later than 15 December 2020, with detailed recommendations for the possible reconfiguration of its mandate and composition to account for developments in the peace process.[249]

In addition to the regular briefings relating to South Sudan and UNMISS, on 15 December 2020, Council members heard a briefing by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) providing a summary of the four videoconferences and one meeting the Committee held in 2020, including its discussions on the final report of the Panel of Experts of 28 April 2020.[250] By resolution 2521 (2020) of 29 May 2020, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council extended the travel ban, asset freeze and arms embargo on South Sudan until 31 May 2021, as well as the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 1 July 2021.[251]

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[246] See S/PV.8741, United States, France, United Kingdom, Dominican Republic, Estonia, South Africa, Germany and Tunisia; S/2020/582, Dominican Republic, South Africa; S/2020/914, Dominican Republic and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and S/2020/1237, Dominican Republic, Germany), and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[247] See S/PV.8741, France), Dominican Republic, Estonia, South Africa; S/2020/582, Dominican Republic; S/2020/914, Dominican Republic, Estonia; and S/2020/1237, Dominican Republic, Germany) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[248] Resolution 2514 (2020), paras. 6 and 7.
[249] Ibid., para. 39.
[250] See S/2020/1237. See also letter dated 28 April 2020 from the Panel of Experts on South Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/342).
[251] Resolution 2521 (2020), paras. 3, 11 and 18.

The Council decided to review the arms embargo measures in light of the progress achieved in the implementation of all provisions of the Revitalized Agreement and the adherence to the ceasefire,[252] and to review the travel ban and asset freeze in light of the progress on the Agreement and the developments related to human rights violations and abuses.[253] Moreover, the resolution provided that the Council would conduct a midterm review in this regard no later than 15 December 2020.[254]

Resolution 2521 (2020) was adopted with 12 votes in favour and three abstentions of China, the Russian Federation and South Africa. In the statements submitted further to the vote, abstaining Council members underscored the need to adjust the sanctions measures in the light of the improved situation in South Sudan and as a means of facilitating the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.[255] The delegation of the Russian Federation submitted that it was not appropriate to condition the review of the sanctions measures on the human rights situation in the country. In contrast, the delegation of the United States submitted that the resolution recognized the positive steps taken by South Sudan's leaders to advance the peace process and clearly stated that the Council would review sanctions measures based on progress achieved on implementing the peace agreement and the measures renewed created space for peace to thrive in South Sudan by reducing the flow of weapons to one of Africa's deadliest conflicts and encouraging the critical reforms outlined in the peace agreement. Several other Council members noted their decision to vote in favour of the resolution given that the text provided for a future review of the measures.[256]

Table 1

[252] Ibid., para. 4.
[253] Ibid., para. 12.
[254] Ibid., paras. 4 and 12. Further to resolution 2521 (2020), in his report dated 31 October 2020 (S/2020/1067), the Secretary-General submitted an assessment of the role of the arms embargo in facilitating the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement and articulating options for the elaboration of benchmarks. In a letter dated 16 December 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General, Council members requested the Secretary-General to conduct a Headquarters based desk review and consultations and to report to the Council with recommendations on benchmarks to assess the arms embargo measures by 31 March 2021 (S/2020/1277). For more information on the sanctions measures concerning South Sudan, see part VII, sect. III.
[255] See S/2020/469, China, Russian Federation and South Africa.
[256] Ibid., Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Viet Nam.

Meetings: Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8718 11 February 2020	Letter dated 14 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/36)	Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2020/110)	Sudan		Two Council members (China, Russian Federation), Sudan	Resolution 2508 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII)
S/PV.8761 25 September 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Assistance Mission in the Sudan (S/2020/912)		Sudan	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations	12 Council members[a], all invitees[b]	

[a] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United States and Viet Nam.
[b] The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations participated in the meeting via videoconference.

Table 2
Videoconferences: Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan – the Sudan

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 March 2020[a]	S/2020/267	Letter dated 31 March 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2517 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII) S/2020/248 (record of written procedure)
24 April 2020	S/2020/336	Letter dated 28 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 May 2020	S/2020/468	Letter dated 29 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2523 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII) S/2020/461 (record of written procedure)

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
4 June 2020	S/2020/496	Letter dated 4 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2524 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/494 (record of written procedure)
4 June 2020	S/2020/497	Letter dated 4 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2525 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII) S/2020/495 (record of written procedure)
9 June 2020	S/2020/528	Letter dated 11 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
10 June 2020	S/2020/538	Letter dated 11 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
15 September 2020	S/2020/913	Letter dated 17 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council.	
8 December 2020	S/2020/1183	Letter dated 18 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
10 December 2020	S/2020/1192	Letter dated 16 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 December 2020	S/2020/1235	Letter dated 17 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
22 December 2020	S/2020/1280	Letter dated 22 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2559 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/1276 (record of written procedure)

[a] Due to technical difficulties, instead of an open videoconference to announce the vote on resolution 2517 (2020) the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

Table 3
Meetings: Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan – Sudan and South Sudan and Abyei

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8772 22 October 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei (S/2020/1019)		Sudan	Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa	11 Council members[a], all invitees	
S/PV.8774 12 November 2020		Draft resolution submitted by United States (S/2020/1098)			Two Council members (Germany, United States)	Resolution 2550 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII)

Table 4
Videoconferences: Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan – the Sudan and South Sudan and Abyei

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
28 April 2020	S/2020/351	Letter dated 30 April 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
14 May 2020	S/2020/408	Letter dated 14 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent	Resolution 2519 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII)

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
		Representatives of the members of the Security Council	S/2020/405 (record of written procedure)

Table 5
Meetings: Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan – South Sudan

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8741 4 March 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (covering the period from 1 December 2019 to 15 February 2020) (S/2020/145)		South Sudan	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS, Coordinator of the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan	All Council members, all invitees[a]	
S/PV.8744 12 March 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in South Sudan (covering the period from 1 December 2019 to 15 February 2020) (S/2020/145)	Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2020/197)			Two council members (Germany, United States)	Resolution 2514 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII)

[a] The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Coordinator of the Women's Monthly Forum on Peace and Political Processes in South Sudan participated in the meeting via videoconference from Juba.

Table 6
Videoconferences: Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan – South Sudan

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
29 May 2020	S/2020/469	Letter dated 29 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2521 (2020) 12-0-3[a] (Chapter VII) S/2020/462 (record of written procedure)
23 June 2020	S/2020/582	Letter dated 25 June 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 September 2020	S/2020/914	Letter dated 18 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
15 December 2020	S/2020/1237	Letter dated 17 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[a] *For*: Belgium, Estonia, France, Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *Against*: None. *Abstaining*: China, Russian Federation and South Africa.

9. Peace consolidation in West Africa

During the period under review, the Security Council held three meetings under the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa". One of the meetings took the form of a briefing and two meetings were convened for the adoption of a decision.[257] More information on the meetings, including invitees, speakers, and outcomes, are noted in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held a videoconference in connection with this item.[258] More information on the videoconference is included in table 2 below. In addition to these meetings, in 2020, Council members also held informal consultations of the whole to discuss this item.[259]

On 8 January 2020, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS).[260] During his briefing, he presented the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOWAS and focused on the surge in terrorist attacks against civilians and military targets. He noted that governments, local actors, regional organizations and the international community were mobilizing across West Africa and the Sahel to respond to terrorism and violent extremism and called upon regional and subregional leaders to follow through on the pledges made to ensure the most effective support for Governments in the region. He also noted that farmer-herder clashes remained some of the most violent local conflicts in the region, exacerbated by climate change. Despite the worrying trends in terms of security, he highlighted the positive political developments in many parts of West Africa and the Sahel, particularly, regarding the dialogue with citizens across political divides and the conduct of elections. He mentioned that unresolved grievances, incomplete national reconciliation processes and the sentiment that institutions and processes were being manipulated carried risks of tensions and manifestations of political violence. In this regard, he stated that UNOWAS would continue to work closely with all national stakeholders and regional partners, especially ECOWAS, to promote consensus and inclusiveness in all the elections to be conducted in the region.

[257] For more information on format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[258] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[259] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 32. See also S/2020/258, pp. 4-5.
[260] See S/PV.8698, pp. 2-4.

During the briefing, Council members expressed concern about the deteriorating security situation in the region relating to violent extremism, terrorism, and criminal activity. In this regard, some Council members expressed their support to the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel and to UNOWAS, including for the strengthening of its mandate.[261] Council members also agreed that the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel) required more international support.[262] Some Council members emphasized the need for a development-focused political and security approach to tackle poverty, unemployment and other underlying causes of instability.[263] In this connection, Council members reflected on the nexus between climate change and conflict in the region, welcomed the Secretary-General's report's reference to the adverse consequences of climate change in the Lake Chad basin and parts of the Sahel, and expressed support for the mandate of UNOWAS to consider the impact of climate change on security as part of its conflict prevention approach.[264] In addition, in light of the risk of political tensions, Council members stressed the need for the peaceful holding of presidential elections in six West African countries – Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Niger and Togo.[265]

On 31 January 2020, Council members agreed to renew the mandate of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) for an additional period of three years, from 1 February 2020 to 31 January 2023, through a letter of the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General. The members of the Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council every six months on the fulfilment by UNOWAS of its mandate.[266]

On 11 February 2020, Council members held a meeting to issue a presidential statement in which they expressed their full support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General

261 Ibid., Niger, France, Indonesia, South Africa, Germany and Tunisia.
262 Ibid., Dominican Republic, China, Indonesia, Tunisia, and Russian Federation.
263 Ibid., Niger, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, China and United Kingdom.
264 Ibid., Belgium, France, Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Germany, Russian Federation and Viet Nam. See also S/2019/1005.
265 See S/PV.8698, Niger, France, United Kingdom, United States, South Africa, Tunisia, Russian Federation and Viet Nam.
266 See S/2020/85 and S/2019/1009. For further information on the mandate of UNOWAS, see part X, sect. II.

in carrying out his mandate and ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS.[267] Council members emphasised that security and stability in Mali were inextricably linked to that of the Sahel and West Africa, as well as to that of Libya and North Africa.[268] Council members expressed concern regarding the continued deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin as well as over the challenging security situation in West Africa, fuelled, among others, by terrorism, transnational organised crime committed and called for a continued national, regional and international engagement to aid to address the peace and security challenges.[269] In the presidential statement, Council members also welcomed the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges in the region, and commended their efforts as well as those of the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), including through the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S), and encouraged Member States to support these efforts by providing the necessary assistance and resources.[270] Council members emphasized the need for national stakeholders in upcoming elections to ensure genuinely free and fair, credible, timely and peaceful elections.[271] Council members also recognised the adverse effects of climate change, energy poverty, ecological changes and natural disasters, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region and continued to stress the need for long-term strategies, based on risk assessments, by governments and the United Nations, to support stabilisation and build resilience and encouraged UNOWAS to continue to integrate this information in its activities.[272]

On 9 July 2020, Council members held a videoconference in connection with this item.[273] At the videoconference, the members of the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative.[274] He presented the latest report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the

[267] See S/PRST/2020/2, fourth paragraph.
[268] Ibid., sixth paragraph.
[269] Ibid., eighth paragraph.
[270] Ibid., eleventh paragraph.
[271] Ibid., fourteenth paragraph.
[272] Ibid., eighteenth paragraph.
[273] See S/2020/706. See also S/2021/9, pp. 5-6.
[274] See S/2020/706.

United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel,[275] and said that since his last briefing to the Council in January, attacks by violent extremists and intercommunal violence had continued to undermine peace and security in the region, particularly in the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. He stated that this had resulted in dire implications for the humanitarian and human rights situation in the region and that terrorist attacks had been accompanied by the forced recruitment of children and abductions in Burkina Faso, Mali, the Niger and Nigeria. He added that the growing linkages between terrorism, organized crime and intercommunal violence could not be overemphasized. Terrorists had continued to exploit latent ethnic animosities and the absence of the State in peripheral areas to advance their agenda. In this regard, he said that the United Nations had to remain committed to working with all partners in order to enhance a more holistic and sustainable approach to these challenges. He added that the international community also needed to increase its support for the full operationalization of the African Union Lake Chad Basin Commission Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region, while accelerating the implementation of the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. He noted that climate change and its effects were amplifying farmer-herder conflicts, increasing social tensions, and fostering rural-urban migration, violence and food insecurity and that the COVID-19 pandemic was exacerbating pre-existing conflict drivers, with grave implications for peace and security in West Africa and the Sahel. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, he said that the region had witnessed a number of positive developments, including the relatively peaceful conduct of the presidential elections in Togo, local elections in Benin and the completion of the work of the Constitutional Review Commission in the Gambia.

Council members reiterated their support for the work of UNOWAS and the Special Representative, and stressed the need for continued international, regional and subregional cooperation.[276] Council members expressed concern about the deteriorating security situation in the region, in particular condemning the spread of terrorism and organized crime,[277] and

[275] S/2020/585.
[276] See S/2020/706, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany and Russian Federation.
[277] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

commended the role played by the Multinational Joint Task Force and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.[278] Council members recalled with deep concern the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which was exacerbating existing grievances and the humanitarian situation in the region.[279] Several Council members stressed the security implications of climate change.[280] Several Council members also emphasized the importance of including women in decision-making and peace processes.[281] In several statements, participants expressed concern about human rights violations in the region.[282] Council members called for peaceful, inclusive and transparent elections in the presidential elections in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea and the Niger and agreed on the importance of political processes and dialogue.[283]

On 28 July 2020, the Council held a meeting to issue a presidential statement in which it expressed the continued concern regarding the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin as well as over the challenging security situation in West-Africa, fuelled, among others, by terrorism, transnational organised crime committed at sea, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, and transnational organised crime.[284] In the presidential statement, the Council reiterated its support for the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire as also expressed in resolution 2532(2020), and expressed concern about the potential of the global COVID-19 pandemic to further exacerbate existing fragilities in the region, undermine development, worsen the humanitarian situation and affect disproportionately women and girls, children, refugees, internally displaced persons, older persons and persons with disabilities and, in that regard, called for international support to the efforts of the countries of region and a coordinated, inclusive, comprehensive and global response.[285] In the presidential statement, the Council also underscored the importance of addressing the underlying conditions

[278] Ibid., China, Estonia, Indonesia and Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[279] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.
[280] Ibid., Belgium, Germany, Indonesia and Viet Nam.
[281] Ibid., Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger and Viet Nam.
[282] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
[283] Ibid, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
[284] See S/PRST/2020/7, seventh paragraph.
[285] Ibid., ninth paragraph.

conducive to the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, and the need for a holistic approach to address the root causes of intercommunal violence.[286]

Table 1
Meetings: Peace consolidation in West Africa

Meeting and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8698 8 January 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2019/1005)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel	All Council members, invitee	
S/PV.8720 11 February 2020						S/PRST/2020/2
S/PV.8752 28 July 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (S/2020/585)					S/PRST/2020/7

Table 2
Videoconferences: Peace consolidation in West Africa

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
9 July 2020	S/2020/706	Letter dated 13 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[286] Ibid., twelfth paragraph.

10. Peace and security in Africa

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting, in the form of an open debate, and issued one presidential statement in connection with the item entitled "Peace and security in Africa".[287] More information on the meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in table 1 below. Council members also held three open videoconferences in connection with this item. More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below.

In 2020, Council members held two open videoconferences focusing on the operations of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel further to the reports of the Secretary-General.[288] In addition, Council members held an open debate to discuss the issue of terrorism and violent extremism in Africa and an open videoconference on the situation regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

On 11 March 2020, at the initiative of China which held the Presidency for the month,[289] the Council held an open debate under the sub-item entitled "Countering terrorism and extremism in Africa".[290] The Council was briefed 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 (UNDP) Administrator. Speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General noted that Africa continued to face vulnerabilities that threatened its peace and security, among which was terrorism and violent extremism. They continued to grow in various parts of the continent, notably in Somalia and East Africa, West Africa, the Sahel and the Lake Chad basin. Recalling the statement of the Secretary-General that the phenomenon could not be addressed without addressing its underlying factors, she stated that the threat of terrorism was often a consequence of development, humanitarian, human rights and security challenges.

[287] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II. A.
[288] See S/2020/373 and S/2020/1074.
[289] The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 26 February 2020 (S/2020/161).
[290] See S/PV.8743.

In her remarks on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the Permanent Observer of the African Union noted the evolving approaches of the African Union in response to the increasing sophistication of tools employed by terrorist groups, including technology. She emphasized the importance of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism in an integrated and comprehensive manner, understanding the motivation, particularly for young people, to join the ranks of extremist groups, and paying more attention to the factors that lay beyond the immediate local context. The Assistant-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the UNDP Administrator emphasized that an integrated and balanced approach to security and development was needed to effectively address the challenges posed by violent extremism.

Following the briefings, several Member States emphasized the need to focus on the root causes as well as the structural causes of terrorism and extremism in Africa.[291] In addition, several speakers called for the strengthening of international, regional and subregional cooperation,[292] and for the implementation of relevant Council resolutions.[293]

At the meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement.[294] In the presidential statement, the Council noted the increasing threat posed to peace and security in Africa by terrorism, especially in the Sahel, the Lake Chad Basin and the Horn of Africa, and underlined the importance of prompt and effective implementation of its resolutions related to the fight against terrorism.[295] The Council also commended the efforts and progress made by African countries, the African Union, and other African regional and subregional organizations, in countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.[296] In addition, the Council stressed the need to

[291] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, Tunisia, Germany, France, Viet Nam, Estonia, Indonesia, European Union, Sierra Leone, Egypt, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, and Ethiopia; S/PV.8743 (Resumption 1), Algeria, Eritrea, and Senegal.
[292] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, Tunisia, United Kingdom, France, Viet Nam, Estonia, Indonesia, Sierra Leon, Sudan, Côte d'Ivoire, Morocco, Ethiopia, and Guinea. S/PV.8743 (Resumption 1) , Japan, Kenya, Eritrea, Angola, and Senegal.
[293] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Viet Nam, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Guinea. S/PV.8743 (Resumption 1), Angola.
[294] S/PRST/2020/5.
[295] Ibid., first and third paragraphs.
[296] Ibid., fifth paragraph.

continue to provide and strengthen support to African Member States at the national, subregional and regional levels,[297] and called on the international community to strengthen its political commitment and to consider mobilizing more sustainable and predicable resources and expertise to strengthen the capacity of African countries in countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism.[298] The Council underscored the importance of a whole of government and whole of society approach, and stressed the importance of cooperation with all relevant stakeholders in countering terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism in Africa, and in that regard encouraged the participation and leadership of women as well as the constructive engagement of youth in that process.[299]

Further to the letters submitted respectively by Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sudan,[300] on 29 June 2020, Council members held an open videoconference in connection with the item to discuss the issues arising from the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) by Ethiopia. At the videoconference, Council members heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. In her remarks, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the Blue Nile was an important transboundary water resource critical for the livelihoods and development of the people of Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sudan. The Under-Secretary-General recalled that the three Blue Nile riparian countries had signed the 2015 Declaration of Principles on the GERD in which they committed to cooperation, equitable and reasonable utilization, security and the peaceful settlement of disputes, and formed a National Independent Scientific Research Study Group in 2018 to discuss the filling and operation of the Dam. She noted the various mediation efforts of the African Union, South Africa, the Sudan, the United States and the European Union, following the inconclusive negotiations among the three riparian countries in February 2020. The Under-Secretary-General reiterated the call of the Secretary-General for the parties to peacefully resolve all outstanding differences with urgency.[301]

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[297] Ibid., nineteenth paragraph. See also seventeenth paragraph.
[298] Ibid., twenty-first paragraph.
[299] Ibid., twelfth paragraph.
[300] See S/2020/355, S/2020/409, S/2020/566, S/2020/567, S/2020/586, S/2020/617, and S/2020/623. For more information on referral of disputes or situations to the attention of the Security Council, see part VI, sect. I.A.
[301] See S/2020/636.

In their statements following the briefing, several Council members called on the three States to solve their differences through dialogue.[302] Furthermore, some Council members urged them to avoid unilateral actions that would undermine the negotiations.[303] The representative of Egypt expressed the view that the unilateral filling and operation of the GERD would heighten tensions and could provoke crises and conflicts that would further destabilize an already troubled region. In that context, he stated that it was important for the Council to consider the matter. The representative of Ethiopia stated that his country did not believe that the dispute related to the GERD had a legitimate place in the Council. He also said that the role of regional organizations was ignored when it was brought to the Council's attention, which contravened Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations.[304]

In relation to the activities of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (Joint Force), Council members heard briefings in June and November 2020 in the context of two open videoconferences. On 5 June 2020, Council members were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations as well as by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mauritania, in his capacity as Chair of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel).[305] In his remarks, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the strengthening of the Joint Force was only one strand in the comprehensive international approach required to tackle the root causes of instability in Mali and the Sahel region. In that regard, he underscored that improving governance, eradicating poverty and protecting human rights of all citizens remained critical. On the support accorded to the operationalization of the Joint Force during the reporting period by the international community, especially by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), he noted, inter alia, that the consumption and disbursement rate of the support provided by MINUSMA had increased from 21 percent to almost 50 percent. The Under-Secretary-General also reiterated the call by the Secretary-General for a comprehensive support package for the Joint Force, funded by assessed contributions. In his view, that would allow for

[302] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States.
[303] Ibid., France, Indonesia, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.
[304] For more information on the practice of the Council in relation to Chapter VI of the Charter, including Article 33, see part VI.
[305] See S/2020/515.

predictable and sustainable support, and also make it easier to pursue a long-term strategy to phase out the support and render the Joint Force autonomous. In his intervention, the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Mauritania commended the close collaboration between the Joint Force and MINUSMA and reaffirmed the G5 Sahel support for MINUSMA and for the extension and strengthening of its mandate. He also communicated the request of the G5 Sahel for the Council to consider the Joint Force under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

In the statements that followed the briefings, Council members expressed concern at the security situation in the Sahel region,[306] as well as the deteriorating security situation in the region.[307] Some Council members also highlighted the need to address the root causes of instability in the region.[308] Furthermore, certain Council members noted the progress achieved by the Joint Force, including, in its counter-terrorism operations carried out during the reporting period and improvement in its capabilities.[309] Lastly, some Council members discussed the subject of adherence to human rights and international humanitarian law in counter-terrorism efforts by the Joint Force.[310]

On 16 November 2020, Council members were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, the Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, on behalf of the European Union, as well as by the Permanent Representative of Canada, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.[311] In his remarks, the Under-Secretary-General noted, in relation to the support model between MINUSMA and the Joint Force, that the issue of predictability of funding remained of concern. In that regard, he emphasized that the Joint Force played a critical role in the regional response to violent extremism and considered it essential for the Joint Force to receive the required assistance to carry out its mandated tasks. Concerning the support that the

[306] Ibid., China, Belgium, Estonia, Russian Federation, and Viet Nam.
[307] Ibid., Dominican Republic and Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).
[308] Ibid., China, Estonia, United States, and Viet Nam.
[309] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Russian Federation), United Kingdom, and United States.
[310] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and United Kingdom.
[311] See S/2020/1126.

international community, particularly MINUSMA, had provided to the Joint Force during the reporting period, he stated, inter alia, that further to the Council's authorization of MINUSMA to engage commercial contractors to deliver life-support consumables to Joint Force contingents operating outside Mali, the Mission had begun to make appropriate arrangements to implement such support. The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security reported that the African Union had decided, in February 2020, to deploy 3,000 troops to the Sahel to strengthen the ongoing efforts to address the security situation in the region, and that it had adopted its Sahel Strategy, which focused on governance, security, as well as integrated development, with a main objective to address the root causes of the challenges facing the Sahel region. He also stated that it was of utmost importance for the United Nations to consider taking the necessary steps that would guarantee sustainable and predictable funding for the Joint Force from the United Nations assessed contributions as doing so would undoubtedly enhance the capabilities of the regional force. The Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service expressed that the sixth ministerial meeting between the European Union and the G5 Sahel, on 9 November 2020, allowed for an initial exchange on the ongoing review of the European Union's Sahel strategy and, in that regard, added that the future approach was more ambitious. The Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) noted that the PBC had listened carefully to the needs and recommendations of women peacebuilders and business leaders from the Sahel region. He noted that the complex challenges required a comprehensive approach to address the root causes of conflict in the Sahel, prevent further escalation of conflict, build and sustain peace, and promote sustainable development.

Following the briefings, some Council members called for investigations into potential violations of human rights and international humanitarian law by the Joint Force.[312] In addition, some Council members encouraged the participation of women and youth in the peace and security architecture of the region.[313] Speaking on behalf of the G5 Sahel, the representative of Mali reiterated the call for a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations as well as predictable and sustainable funding for the Joint Force.

[312] Ibid., Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, and United States.
[313] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, and Viet Nam.

Table 1
Meetings: Peace and security in Africa

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8743 S/PV.8743 (Resumption1) 11 March 2020	Countering terrorism and extremism in Africa Letter dated 26 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/161)		16 invitees[a]	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Assistant-Secretary-General and Special Adviser to the United Nations Development Programme Administrator, Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations	12 Council members[b], all invitees[c]	S/PRST/2020/5

[a] Algeria, Angola, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Japan, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Togo.
[b] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.
[c] The Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations spoke on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, and Turkey also aligned themselves with the statement.

Table 2
Videoconferences: Peace and security in Africa

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
5 June 2020	S/2020/515	Letter dated 9 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 June 2020	S/2020/636	Letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 November 2020	S/2020/1126	Letter dated 18 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

11. The situation in Libya

During the period under review, the Security Council held four meetings under the item entitled "The situation in Libya".[314] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. Council members also held seven open videoconferences in connection with this item,[315] and the Council adopted four resolutions, including two under Chapter VII of the Charter.[316] More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held closed videoconferences, informal consultations of the whole and an informal interactive dialogue to discuss this item.[317]

In 2020, the Council was briefed once by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), who resigned in early March. Subsequently, the regular briefings to the Council were provided by the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Briefings by the Special Representative and the Acting Special Representative focused on the political, security, humanitarian and socio-economic developments in Libya. Other briefers included the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya who briefed on the activities and developments relating to the work of the Committee and its Panel of Experts and the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) whose briefings' main focus were the Court's ongoing investigations regarding the situation in Libya.

In January, the Council heard the last briefing by the Special Representative, during which he provided updates on the Berlin Conference held on 19 January 2020, describing the conference as a serious effort to try to unify a discordant international community and to give

[314] For more information on format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[315] For more information on the format of meetings, and the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[316] Resolutions 2509 (2020) (adopted under Chapter VII); 2510 (2020); 2526 (2020) (adopted under Chapter VII) and 2542 (2020).
[317] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 38. See also S/2020/258, S/2020/344, S/2020/558, S/2020/789, S/2020/1102, and S/2021/203.

hope to the beleaguered Libyans, in the form of "a protective international umbrella". He urged the Council to adopt a resolution to endorse the conclusions of the Berlin Conference. The Special Representative further expressed concern that the recent truce held only in name and reported that foreign sponsors were providing the warring parties in Libya with equipment and fighters, in brazen violation of the arms embargo and the pledges made by representatives of those countries in Berlin. The Special Representative expressed "deep anger and disappointment" over the actions of "unscrupulous actors inside and outside Libya". [318]

Subsequently, on 12 February 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2510 (2020), welcoming the Berlin Conference convened on 19 January 2020 and endorsing the Conference Conclusions as contained in a letter from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.[319] In the resolution, the Council requested the Secretary-General to take forward as quickly as possible the tasks ascribed to UNSMIL in the operationalisation paper contained in the aforementioned letter and to make recommendations to the Council on the options reflected in that paper.[320] The Council welcomed the nomination of representatives to the 5+5 Joint Military Commission and called for the meetings of the Commission to continue to take place with full participation and without further delay in order to agree a permanent ceasefire.[321] The Council also condemned the increase in levels of violence and demanded the parties commit to a lasting ceasefire according to the terms agreed by the Joint Military Commission.[322] The Council further recalled the commitments made at Berlin to abide by the arms embargo and demanded full compliance including by all Member States with the arms embargo imposed under resolution 1970 (2011) as modified by subsequent resolutions, including by ceasing all support for and withdrawing all armed mercenary personnel, and demanded all Member States not to intervene in the conflict or take measures that exacerbate

[318] See S/PV.8710. The Secretary-General had briefed the Council on the outcomes of the Berlin conference on 21 January 2020, see S/2020/258.
[319] Resolution 2510 (2020), paras. 1 and 2. See also S/2020/63. The result of the vote was as follows: *For*: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States and Viet Nam. A*gainst*: none. *Abstaining*: Russian Federation.
[320] Resolution 2510 (2020), para. 3.
[321] Ibid., para. 4.
[322] Ibid., para. 6.

the conflict.[323] Furthermore, the Council requested the Secretary-General to report on the progress regarding the work of the International Follow-Up Committee called for at the Berlin Conference.[324] After the vote, most Council members highlighted the importance of the resolution in signalling the Council's broad support for a political process that strived for unity and peace in Libya and would bring an end to hostilities and foreign interference.[325] The representative of the Russian Federation explained that his delegation had abstained on the vote as the resolution was not viable since the consent of the Libyan parties had not been obtained, and that the Council should have waited for the outcome of the Libyan consultations before adopting the resolution.[326] The representative of the United States expressed disappointment that the resolution had not been adopted unanimously, despite commitments agreed to by leaders in Berlin, including the Russian Federation. The representative of the United Kingdom meanwhile stressed that the Council was a sovereign body that did not act only when parties asked it to act, and that "consensus should never mean, and has never meant, the lowest common denominator". Having taken note of the fact that the resolution had not been adopted unanimously, the representative of China said that the views of all sides should be fully respected during consultations. The representative of Libya said that the resolution had raised hopes, while questioning whether the Council would be able to put an end to the obstructionists and put an end to the flow of mercenaries.

Briefing Council members during her first open videoconference on 19 May, the Acting Special Representative reported on the alarmingly high levels of violence and military build-up in the country, as well as the brokering by UNSMIL of a ceasefire agreement between the major parties to the conflict. In the wake of military developments, the Acting Special Representative observed there could be a window to resume political activity. In that regard, she welcomed the constructive stance taken by the Prime Minister and the President of the House of Representatives. Noting with appreciation the support expressed by participants in the Berlin Conference, she also called for a halt to the inflow of military support from abroad in violation of

[323] Ibid., para. 10.
[324] Ibid., para. 12.
[325] See S/PV.8722, Germany, Tunisia, China, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Estonia, United States and United Kingdom.
[326] Ibid.

the United Nations arms embargo. She stressed that collectively, the Council could apply consistent and credible pressure on those regional and international actors that were fuelling the conflict.[327]

On 8 July 2020, Council members held a high-level open videoconference at which they were briefed by the Secretary-General.[328] Noting that the meeting came six months after the Berlin Conference, he reported that the conflict had entered a new phase, where foreign interference had reached unprecedented levels, including the delivery of sophisticated equipment and the number of mercenaries involved in the fighting. The Secretary-General expressed concern about the alarming military build-up around Sirte and the high level of direct foreign interference in the conflict in violation of the United Nations arms embargo, Security Council resolutions and the commitments made by Member States in Berlin. He stressed the need to seize all opportunities to unblock the political stalemate and added that de-escalation efforts, including the creation of a possible demilitarized zone, were being undertaken by UNSMIL. The Secretary-General reported that the political situation in eastern Libya indicated renewed support for a political solution. The Secretary-General warned, however, that such openings were fragile given that the parties' positions continued to be determined by military developments and support from external backers. Meanwhile, he added, developments on the ground had yielded an agreement to reconvene the 5+5 Joint Military Commission, which had held a third round of talks in June. Regarding the Berlin process, meetings of the plenary of the international follow-up committee continued to take place and the political, security and economic working groups

[327] See S/2020/421. See also S/2020/360.

[328] See S/2020/686. China was represented by its State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs; Germany was represented by its Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs; Niger was represented by its Minster for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad; Tunisia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; South Africa was represented by Minister for International Relations and Cooperation; the United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa. Statements were also delivered by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Algeria; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece; the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy; the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of Morocco; the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission; the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States; the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates; the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration, International Cooperation, and the Diaspora of Chad; the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Turkey; and by the representatives of the Congo, Libya, the Netherlands, the Sudan and Switzerland. For further details on the discussion, see part III sect. III.

were all operational and contributing to UNSMIL's ongoing efforts to facilitate a Libyan-led and Libyan-owned dialogue.[329]

On 2 September 2020, Council members held an open videoconference at which the Acting Special Representative briefed on the Secretary-General's report on UNSMIL.[330] She reiterated that Libya was at a decisive turning point and that the Council's support would help to determine the future of the country. Describing military developments, including the situation around Sirte, she noted that continued foreign interference in the conflict constituted an alarming breach of Libya's sovereignty and a blatant violation of the United Nations arms embargo, not to mention the commitments undertaken by the Berlin Conference participants. She noted that the partial lifting of the oil blockade on 18 August, which had been in place since January 2020, had a minimal impact on the severe energy crisis faced by Libya. She stressed that the situation in the country produced fertile ground for social unrest and confirmed once more that the status quo was unsustainable. Stressing the need to press for immediate de-escalation and a return to the political process, she reported that some glimmers of hope had appeared from within the country. On 21 August, the President of the Presidency Council and the Speaker of the House of Representatives had issued simultaneous, yet separate, statements calling for an immediate ceasefire, the lifting of the oil blockade and a return to the political process under United Nations auspices. The Acting Special Representative noted that those statements had been met with overwhelming expressions of support from all political affiliations in the country and international partners alike. She remained optimistic that there was a chance to move forward with intra-Libyan political and security discussions. On the military front, she reported that UNSMIL had continued discussions with delegations of both sides under the auspices of the 5+5 Joint Military Commission.[331]

On 19 November 2020, at an open videoconference, the Acting Special Representative reported that efforts by UNSMIL, with the support of the Council and the Berlin-established International Follow-up Committee on Libya, to facilitate dialogue among the Libyan parties, had resulted in the signing of a countrywide permanent ceasefire agreement in Geneva on 23

[329] Ibid.
[330] See S/2020/832.
[331] See S/2020/879.

October by the 5+5 Joint Military Commission.[332] She noted that the historic agreement provided for the withdrawal of all military units and armed groups from the front lines and the departure of all mercenaries and foreign fighters from the entire Libyan territory within a period of 90 days. To expedite the operationalization of the agreement, she stated that two subsequent rounds of discussions had taken place on Libyan soil. Tangible progress had been achieved as part of the package of confidence-building measures agreed in Geneva and following arrangements to remove foreign forces from the oil installations, the National Oil Corporation had lifted the force majeure on oil installations, ending the oil blockade that had been imposed on the country for more than nine months. The Acting Special Representative reported that on 9 November, she had convened the first in-person session of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum in Tunis, on the basis of the Berlin Conference conclusions endorsed by resolution 2510 (2020). On 15 November, the 75 participants in the Political Dialogue Forum had adopted a political road map to presidential and parliamentary elections to be held on 24 December 2021. The Acting Special Representative expressed particular gratitude to the women participants, who had played a critical role in the Political Dialogue Forum and made important contributions as bridge-builders. Furthermore, she stressed the need to respect the principle of non-interference in Libya's internal affairs and the full implementation of the United Nations arms embargo on Libya and called upon the Council to use the tools at its disposal to do so, including to prevent obstructionists from jeopardizing the rare opportunity to restore peace in Libya. Concluding, the Acting Special Representative expressed optimism about the way forward in Libya, while acknowledging the many challenges ahead, and stated that she had witnessed "the potential for a paradigm shift" in the preceding months.[333]

In addition to the above, the Acting Special Representative reported throughout her briefings on the situation of migrants and asylum seekers in Libya, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law and the economic and institutional challenges in Libya.[334]

[332] See S/2020/1043.
[333] See S/2020/1129.
[334] See S/2020/421, S/2020/879 and S/2020/1129.

During the period under review, the Council was briefed by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya on 30 January 2020, 19 May 2020 and 2 September 2020. Thereafter and until the end of the year, there were no further briefings by the Chair. During a videoconference on 19 November, the representative of Germany explained that the presentation of the Committee's activities planned for that meeting had to be cancelled, owing to the blockade of one member of the Committee.[335] During the briefings, the Chair reported on the activities and developments relating to the work of the Committee and its Panel of Experts. The Chair's briefings highlighted the violations of the sanctions regime, in particular the arms embargo, exemption requests with respect to the travel ban and arms embargo, the implementation of the assets freeze and the illicit exports of petroleum from Libya. The Chair also recalled that the primary responsibility to implement sanctions measures rested with Member States and encouraged them to continue supporting the work of the Panel of Experts.[336]

The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) briefed the Council twice to report on the progress and challenges relating to the Court's ongoing investigations regarding the situation in Libya. During a videoconference on 5 May 2020, the Prosecutor informed Council members that despite the limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, her team was forging ahead with its judicial work and investigations. She highlighted the issues of arbitrary detentions, and the increasing number of enforced disappearances and hate speech. Regarding the disappearance of parliamentarian Siham Sergewa, she reported that her Office had obtained and was verifying information that could point to those responsible. She also informed Council members on the status of the Court's efforts to arrest three Libyan suspects who remained at large, namely, Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi, Al-Tuhamy Khaled and Mahmoud Al-Werfalli. With regard to Saif Al-Islam Al-Qadhafi, she noted that the Appeals Chamber had unanimously ruled that his case was admissible before the Court, and that therefore his arrest warrant remained

[335] See S/2020/1129.
[336] See S/PV.8710, S/2020/421 and S/2020/879. For further details on the sanctions measures concerning Libya, see part VII sect. III. For more information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya and its Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.

enforceable.[337] During the second videoconference on 10 November 2020, the Prosecutor noted that her Office's request for General Khalifa Haftar to arrest and surrender Mr. Al-Werfalli to the Court had gone unheeded. Noting that Al-Tuhamy Khaled was still alleged to be in Egypt, she urged all relevant states, including the Arab Republic of Egypt, to ensure that fugitives wanted by the Court were surrendered without delay. The Prosecutor further reported that investigations had significantly progressed since May 2020. She stated that multiple mass graves had been discovered in the city of Tarhouna and south of Tripoli and that her office continued to receive information on attacks and crimes against civilians.[338]

In their deliberations in 2020, Council members expressed deep concern about the escalating violence in Libya.[339] In response to violations of the sanctions regime, particularly the arms embargo, Council members called on all parties to fully respect, strictly implement and comply with the obligations established by the arms embargo, particularly in view of the endorsement of the Berlin conference conclusions.[340] They welcomed the 23 October 2020 ceasefire agreement, and urged all actors, both inside and outside Libya, to support its full implementation, including through the immediate withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from that country.[341] Furthermore, Council members welcomed the progress on the political track and expressed their full support for the UNSMIL-facilitated Libyan Political Dialogue Forum,[342] with some particularly emphasizing the need for the participation of women.[343]

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[337] See S/2020/371.
[338] See S/2020/1108.
[339] See S/PV.8710, United Kingdom, United States, France, Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Indonesia, Russian Federation, China, Belgium, South Africa, Germany, Estonia, Niger, Tunisia and Viet Nam.
[340] See S/PV.8710, United Kingdom, United States, France, Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Indonesia, Russian Federation, China, Belgium, South Africa, Germany, Estonia, Niger, Tunisia and Viet Nam. S/2020/686, China, Germany, Niger, Tunisia, South Africa, United Kingdom, Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United States and Viet Nam. For more information, see part VIII, sect. III.
[341] See S/2020/1129, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Viet Nam, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.
[342] See S/2020/879, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States; S/2020/1108, Belgium, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
[343] See S/2020/686, Viet Nam; S/2020/879, United Kingdom; and S/2020/1129, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and United Kingdom.

In deliberations following the briefing by the ICC Prosecutor, several Council members expressed their support for the ICC as an important pillar of the rules-based international order, with some noting that the Prosecutor and her team had to be able to exercise their functions without obstruction.[344] In contrast, the representative of the Russian Federation affirmed that the activities of the ICC in Libya were becoming increasingly irrelevant suggesting that when peace were firmly established, Libyans would be able to decide for themselves how to address the issue of justice.[345] He also suggested that the Court had chosen a strategy of discriminate justice and not to take real steps to investigate the acts committed by all sides of the Libyan conflict.[346] Other Council members highlighted the principle of complementarity of the ICC to Libya's national jurisdiction.[347] While reiterating his country's long-standing and principled objection to any assertion of ICC jurisdiction over nationals of States that are not party to the Rome Statute, absent a Security Council referral or the consent of such States, the representative of the United States affirmed that his country continued to be a strong supporter of meaningful accountability and justice for victims of atrocities through appropriate mechanisms. Other Council members stressed that ending impunity for grave crimes was necessary to achieve a lasting peaceful solution for the crisis in Libya, and called on all parties to cooperate with the ICC and faithfully carry out their obligations to execute the outstanding arrest warrants.[348] Furthermore, several Council members called for the enforcement of the arms embargo.[349]

In his statements, the representative of Libya highlighted the sufferings and frustration of the people of Libya. He reminded the Council of its responsibility towards Libya, in particular with regard to holding accountable those responsible for foreign interference and war crimes in

[344] See S/2020/371, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom; and S/2020/1108, Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.
[345] See S/2020/371.
[346] See S/2020/1108.
[347] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Indonesia, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam); and S/2020/1108, France, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia.
[348] See S/2020/371, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, South Africa, United Kingdom; S/2020/1108, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and United Kingdom.
[349] See S/2020/371, China, Niger, Viet Nam; and S/2020/1108, China, Germany, Niger, South Africa, Tunisia, Viet Nam.

the conflict.[350] He noted that the launch of the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum was a "ray of hope" for Libyans, while underscoring that the role of the Libyan parties in dialogue was crucial for the process to succeed. He also called on the Council to adopt a binding resolution supporting the consensus reached by Libyans in the various dialogues, including a road map and a constitutional provision on holding elections on 24 December 2021, and to grant UNSMIL a mandate to provide technical and logistical support for the electoral process.[351]

The issues outlined above were also addressed by the Council in the resolutions adopted during the period under review. In addition to resolution 2510 (2020) described above, on 11 February 2020, the Council adopted non-unanimously resolution 2509 (2020) under Chapter VII of the Charter. In this resolution, the Council decided to extend until 30 April 2021 the authorizations provided and measures imposed by resolution 2146 (2014) and 2441 (2018) and to modify the period for designating vessels for some or all of the measures in resolution 2146 (2014) to one year, renewable by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011).[352] The Council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts established by resolution 1973 (2011) until 15 May 2021, and requested that the Panel closely follow and report to the Committee any information relating to the illicit export from or illicit import to Libya of petroleum, including crude oil and refined petroleum products.[353] The Council also called on all Member States to comply fully with the arms embargo and not to intervene in the conflict or take measures that exacerbated the conflict.[354] In his statement after the vote, the representative of the Russian Federation noted that his country had abstained as the resolution had included new language on the illicit importation of oil products into Libya. He noted that the Council should not forget about the oil needs of the Libyans living in the east of the country.[355]

On 5 June 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2526 (2020), by which it extended for 12 months the authorizations set out in resolution 2473 (2019), by which it

[350] See S/2020/371; S/2020/1108; and S/2020/1129.
[351] See S/2020/1129.
[352] Resolution 2509 (2020), para. 2. See also resolution 2441 (2018), para. 2 and resolution 2146 (2014), para 11.
[353] Resolution 2509 (2020), paras. 3 and 11.
[354] Resolution 2509 (2020), para. 6. For further details on the sanctions measures concerning Libya, see part VII sect. III. For more information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya and its Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.
[355] See S/PV.8719.

authorized Member States, acting nationally or through regional organizations, to inspect vessels which they had reasonable grounds to believe are carrying arms or related materiel to or from Libya in order to ensure strict implementation of the arms embargo on the high seas off the coast of Libya, and to use all measures commensurate to the specific circumstances to carry out such inspections.[356]

On 15 September 2020, the Council adopted non-unanimously resolution 2542 (2020), by which it extended the mandate of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) until 15 September 2021.[357] Among other tasks, the Council requested UNSMIL, in full accordance with the principles of national ownership, to further the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement; support efforts by the Government of National Accord to stabilize post-conflict zones; monitor and report violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including sexual violence in conflict; and support the provision of essential services and delivery of humanitarian assistance, including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.[358] By the resolution, the Council also decided that UNSMIL would be led by a Special Envoy of the Secretary-General who would exercise overall leadership of UNSMIL with a particular focus on good offices and mediation with Libyan and international actors to end the conflict and that, under the authority of the Special Envoy, an UNSMIL Coordinator would be in charge of UNSMIL's day-to-day operations and management, and requested the Secretary-General to appoint his Special Envoy without delay.[359] The Council further requested the Secretary-General to assess the steps required to reach a ceasefire and the possible role of UNSMIL in providing scalable ceasefire support, as well as to conduct an independent strategic review of UNSMIL.[360] Further to the vote, several Council members expressed support for UNSMIL and welcomed collaborations between UNSMIL, regional organizations and Libya's neighbours. [361] The representative of the Russian Federation stated that his country had abstained in the vote as not all of its amendments

[356] Resolution 2526 (2020), para. 1. See also resolution 2292 (2016), para. 3. For more information concerning the decisions of the Council relating to Article 42 of the Charter during the period under review, see part VII, sect. IV.A.
[357] Resolution 2542 (2020), para. 1. For further details on the mandate of UNSMIL, see part X, sect. II.
[358] Resolution 2542 (2020), para. 1.
[359] Ibid., para 2. For further details on Special Envoy on Libya, see part IX, sect. VI.
[360] Ibid., paras. 4-5.
[361] See S/PV.8758, South Africa, Viet Nam, Russian Federation, China, Indonesia and Tunisia.

had been reflected in the text, and that UNSMIL's monitoring of a cessation of hostilities in Libya should only be carried out at the request of and with the agreement of the Libyan parties. Meanwhile, the representative of China noted that issues relating to human rights, gender and ceasefire monitoring had not been properly resolved in the resolution. Responding to the concerns raised by the Russian Federation and China, the representative of the United Kingdom, as penholder, noted that the new language added to the resolution in response to the Russian Federation's concerns made it clear that UNSMIL would only be involved in implementing a ceasefire once it was agreed by the Libyan parties. He further stated that a number of references supporting the human rights agenda and on conflict-related sexual violence had been removed upon China's request to reach a compromise with other members of the Council who felt that they were important issues.

Developments in Libya were also considered under the item "Maintenance of international peace and security".[362]

Table 1
Meetings: The situation in Libya

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8710 30 January 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2020/41)		Libya	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL)	All Council members[a], all invitees[b]	
S/PV.8719 11 February 2020		Draft resolution submitted by Germany and United Kingdom (S/2020/111)			Two Council members (China, Russian Federation)	Resolution 2509 (2020) 14-0-1[c] (adopted under Chapter VII)
S/PV.8722 12 February 2020		Draft resolution submitted by United Kingdom (S/2020/113)	Libya		Nine Council members,[d] Libya	Resolution 2510 (2020) 14-0-1[e] (adopted under Chapter VII)

[362] For further details, see part I, sect. 35.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8758 15 September 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (S/2020/832)	Draft resolution submitted by United Kingdom (S/2020/896)			Seven Council members[f]	Resolution 2542 (2020) 13-0-2[g]

[a] The representative of Germany briefed the Council in his capacity as the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya.
[b] The Special Representative participated in the meeting via videoconference from Brazzaville.
[c] *For*: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *Against*: none. *Abstaining*: Russian Federation.
[d] China, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. Niger associated itself with the statement by Tunisia.
[e] *For*: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *Against*: none. *Abstaining*: Russian Federation.
[f] China, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Vietnam.
[g] *For*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. A*gainst*: none. *Abstaining*: China, Russian Federation.

Table 2
Videoconferences: The situation in Libya

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
5 May 2020	S/2020/371	Letter dated 7 May from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
19 May 2020	S/2020/421	Letter dated 21 May from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
5 June 2020	S/2020/509	Letter dated 5 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2526 (2020) 15-0-0 (Chapter VII) S/2020/504 (Record of written procedure)
8 July 2020	S/2020/686	Letter dated 10 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
2 September 2020	S/2020/879	Letter dated 4 September from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
10 November 2020	S/2020/1108	Letter dated 13 November from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
19 November 2020	S/2020/1129	Letter dated 23 November from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

12. The situation in Mali

During the period under review, the Security Council held four meetings in connection with the item entitled "The situation in Mali". Three of the meetings took the form of briefings and one was convened for the adoption of decisions.[363] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. Council members also held four open videoconferences in connection with this item, two of which were devoted to the announcement of the adoption of resolutions.[364] More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In 2020, the Council adopted two resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter and issued one presidential statement. In addition to the meetings and open videoconferences, Council members also held informal consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences,[365] including a closed videoconference with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001).[366]

In 2020, the Council was briefed twice by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA and once by the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and the African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel. Briefings were conducted further to the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali.[367] The Council was also briefed once by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017).

At the meeting held on 15 January 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations informed the Council that the situation in Mali and the wider Sahel region was deteriorating at an alarming rate and referred to the wounding of 18 peacekeepers during an attack on MINUSMA's camp in Tessalit the week before. Politically, the implementation of the

[363] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.A.
[364] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[365] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 39. See also S/2021/9.
[366] The closed videoconference was held on 10 June 2021 in connection with 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"; see A/75/2, part II, chap. 22.
[367] See S/2019/983, S/2020/223, S/2020/476, and S/2020/952.

2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali (the Agreement) had been slow and uneven. He said that while important decisions had been postponed, significant progress had been made on the inclusive national dialogue. The Under-Secretary-General was particularly encouraged by the high participation of women and commended the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* for joining the final stages of the dialogue, but also expressed regret at the absence of opposition parties. He also referred to the progress regarding the disarmament and integration of former combatants into the Malian Defence and Security Forces (MDSF) as well as the creation of a legal framework for the establishment of the Northern Development Zone.[368]

Concerning MINUSMA's mandate, the Under-Secretary-General highlighted that in recent months, in line with resolution 2480 (2019), the Mission had done its utmost to support the stabilization and restoration of State authority in Central Mali, while continuing to support the implementation of the Agreement. MINUSMA's increased presence and activity in the Mopti region had contributed to preventing a further escalation of intercommunal violence and large-scale massacres. He stated that the Mission's added focus on central Mali had required it to divert key capabilities from Gao to Mopti, and that it was not feasible to implement its additional strategic priority in the centre without additional resources. In order to address that challenge, MINUSMA had developed a plan to adapt its uniformed components within the authorized troop and police strength, while taking into account the needs of the civilian component to effectively implement its mandate in central and northern Mali. The Under-Secretary-General reported that the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (Joint Force) had been unable to take full advantage of MINUSMA's operational and logistical support, in line with resolutions 2391 (2017) and 2480 (2019), as it did not have the capacity to transport the essential consumables that MINUSMA provided to all its sectors and contingents.[369]

On 7 April 2020, at an open videoconference, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA informed Council members that despite the exceptional circumstances posed by the COVID-19 pandemic MINUSMA was continuing to fulfil the mission entrusted to it by the Council in accordance with resolution 2480 (2019) in particular the

[368] See S/PV.8703.
[369] Ibid.

implementation of the Agreement and supporting the political framework for the management of the crisis in the centre. On the implementation of the Agreement, he reported that the first reconstituted units of the MDSF had been redeployed to the north and that the Prime Minister's visit to the northern regions was a demonstration of trust-building among the signatory parties to the Agreement. He also informed Council members about the conduct of the first round of the legislative elections in a peaceful atmosphere, adding that at the national level the 30 per cent quota for women had been respected. On the management of the crisis in the centre, the Special Representative reported that MINUSMA continued to implement its adaptation plan and that a hotline had been established in Mopti to serve the civilian population as part of Mission's efforts to respond to early warnings. In relation to regional security cooperation, the Special Representative reported that MINUSMA continued to provide logistical support to the Joint Force and in that context, the construction work on the Joint Force headquarters in Bamako had started.[370]

In his statement at the open videoconference held on 11 June 2020, the Secretary-General stated that the multifaceted crises in Mali and the Sahel continued to take a heavy toll on the people across the region, with terrorist and criminal groups expanding their activities and exploiting long-standing tensions along community lines and the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In spite of protracted delays in the implementation of the Agreement, he acknowledged that important progress had been made over the previous year and encouraged the signatory parties to strengthen mutual trust and to work together to keep up the momentum in the peace process. He noted that efforts to combat impunity remained essential to curbing the violence in the centre and said that more needed to be done by the authorities to demonstrate their commitment in that regard, and highlighted the need to bring to justice the perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers.[371]

The Secretary-General also expressed concern about the situation in central Mali and stated that he was appalled by allegations of summary killings and executions of civilians. He also mentioned that MINUSMA and the Secretariat had taken important steps to enhance the

[370] See S/2020/286.
[371] See S/2020/541.

Mission's presence in central Mali and to better protect civilians and that the adaptation plan remained a viable proposal for a more agile, mobile and flexible operation. He said that the humanitarian situation was equally concerning, noting that the number of people in need of assistance was expected to increase to 5 million over the following months, and called for swift and determined international action to address the most urgent humanitarian needs and mitigate the destabilizing effects of COVID-19. The Secretary-General commended the MDSF, the Joint Force and the French forces for stepping up their operations and improving coordination in the Liptako-Gourma region with the aim of defeating terrorist groups operating in that critical area. He also stressed that support for the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel) remained vital, and reiterated his call for a comprehensive support package, funded by assessed contributions, to allow for predictable and sustainable support for the Joint Force.

The African Union High Representative for Mali and the Sahel stated that Mali and the Sahel region faced a triple crisis involving health, economic and security factors, due to COVID-19. He noted the drastic deterioration of the security situation in the Liptako-Gourma area with an increase in number and intensity of terrorist group actions and the continuation of intercommunal conflict. The difficult security situation had exacerbated the humanitarian situation and weakened respect for human rights, including a growing number of displaced persons and the lack of basic social services. In response, Mali had launched a new military initiative, Operation Maliko, with tangible results and the Joint Force had grown in strength and the cooperation and coordination mechanism set up in Pau seemed to be working properly. He also addressed the political situation and the implementation of the Agreement, and expressed hope that the next Government would be able to create new momentum in the implementation of the peace agreement by adopting a new timetable for completing the priority actions that had already been identified.[372]

At the meeting held on 8 October 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA noted that the period covered by the report of the Secretary-General was marked by significant sociopolitical developments and made reference to his statement during a closed videoconference held on 27 July 2020, at which he had explained that

[372] Ibid.

the main causes of the then crisis were the weakening of central institutions and the loss of confidence in political actors and the rise of religious leaders; the delay in the implementation of the Agreement and the worsening socioeconomic situation; and the deterioration of the security situation, in particular in the centre of the country. He highlighted the paralysis in Mali's institutions, notably the Constitutional Court and the National Assembly. It was in this context of deadlock that the mutiny of 18 August 2020 had led to the resignation of President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita. He explained that the coup de force was condemned by the entire international community. In addition to condemning this unconstitutional change, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had decided to suspend Mali from all of its institutions and declared sanctions, including the closure of borders, an air embargo and the suspension of financial transactions, until a civil transition was put in place. He also explained that days of national consultations were organized from 10 to 12 September which led to the adoption of a transition charter, complementing the Constitution. As provided for in the charter, a President of the Transition had been appointed in the person of Bah N'Daou, a retired Colonel Major and former Minister of Defence. Further to the President, a Vice-President and Prime Minister were appointed, and the Government was formed on 5 October made up of 25 members, in accordance with the recommendations of the inclusive national dialogue. With the formation of the new Government and the lifting of sanctions, he expressed hope for the swift establishment of the national transitional council, which would serve as the legislative body throughout the 18-month transitional period.[373]

On 17 November 2020, the Council held a meeting to hear a briefing by the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali. The Chair informed the Council about the activities of the Committee during 2020, highlighting the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its working methods. He also reported that since the Committee was established, eight individuals had been placed on the sanctions list pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017).[374]

[373] See S/PV.8765.
[374] See S/PV.8777.

In the discussions in the Council during the period under review, Council members noted the deteriorating security environment in Mali and in the wider Sahel region. Against this backdrop, Council members focused, inter alia, on the implementation of the Agreement, the role of MINUSMA in support of the Agreement and the definition of its mandate and strength and on the use of sanctions to promote peace and security in Mali. Council members noted the positive progress regarding the implementation of the Agreement, underscoring that there was no viable alternative in achieving peace and stability in the country. Some Council members emphasized the importance of increasing women's participation in Mali's political process.[375] Council members also expressed support for the development of MINUSMA's adaptation plan for central Mali aimed at achieving the mandate priorities laid out in resolution 2480 (2019). In addition, Council members expressed different views on the force strength of MINUSMA and concerning the focus of its mandate.[376] Regarding the sanctions regime, Council members cautioned that those that hindered the implementation of the Agreement risked facing sanctions pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017).[377] Some Council members expressed regret that the Council had failed to seize the opportunity to strengthen the sanctions, and to expand the mandate of the Panel of Experts.[378] In addition, following the 18 August 2020 coup d'état, Council members highlighted the key role played by ECOWAS in handling the ensuing political crisis.[379]

During the period under review, the Council adopted two resolutions in connection with this item; one relating to the mandate of MINUSMA and one in connection with the sanctions measures in Mali. On 29 June 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2531 (2020), acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, extending the mandate of MINUSMA until 30 June 2021 and renewing its authorization to MINUSMA to use all necessary means to carry out its

[375] See, in particular, S/PV.8703, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominican Republic, Germany, Estonia, United Kingdom, and Viet Nam; S/2020/286, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Niger, and Viet Nam; S/2020/541, France, Dominican Republic, Tunisia, Estonia, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; S/PV.8765, France, Viet Nam, Estonia, United Kingdom, United States, Belgium, and Dominican Republic.
[376] See S/PV.8703, United States and Russian Federation; S/2020/286, Germany; and S/2020/541, Niger.
[377] See, in particular, S/PV.8703, France, United States, Belgium, and United Kingdom; S/2020/541, France; and S/PV.8765, United States and Dominican Republic.
[378] See S/2020/867.
[379] S/PV.8765, France, Niger, (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), China, Viet Nam, Estonia, United States, Germany, Dominican Republic, and Russian Federation.

mandate.[380] The Council also expressed its full support to the continuation of the implementation of MINUSMA's adaptation plan, and encouraged Member States to contribute to the plan by providing the capabilities needed for its success, particularly air assets.[381] While reiterating the first and second strategic priorities of MINUSMA, the Council modified some and added new elements to the existing tasks.[382] In addition, the Secretary-General was requested to develop and present to the Council by 31 March 2021 a long-term road map focusing on benchmarks and conditions that would open the way for a possible exit strategy for MINUSMA.[383] On 31 August 2020, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2541 (2020), extending until 31 August 2021 the asset freeze and travel ban imposed by resolution 2374 (2017).[384] The Council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 30 September 2021.[385]

In addition, on 15 October 2020, the Council issued a presidential statement welcoming the establishment of the transitional arrangements in Mali, including the appointment of a Transitional president, vice-president, prime minister, and government, and the issuance of a Transition Charter.[386] The Council underlined that the transition be conducted in accordance with the Transitional Charter, leading to constitutional order and elections, within 18 months.[387] In the presidential statement, the Council reiterated the strategic importance of the full, effective and inclusive implementation of the Agreement, and called on the transitional authorities to take ownership of the document and on the signatory armed groups to fulfill their commitment to its implementation.[388] The Council commended the continued commitment of and mediation efforts by ECOWAS over the past months in Mali, and encouraged it to accompany Mali in the

[380] Resolution 2531 (2020), paras. 16 and 18. For more information on the mandate of MINUSMA, see part X, sect. I.
[381] Ibid., para. 23.
[382] Ibid., paras. 28 and 29. For further details, see part X, sect. I.
[383] Ibid., para. 64.
[384] Resolution 2541 (2020), para. 1. For more information on the sanctions measures concerning Mali, see part VII, sect. III.
[385] Resolution 2541 (2020), para. 3. For more information on the Committee and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.
[386] S/PRST/2020/10, first paragraph.
[387] Ibid., third paragraph.
[388] Ibid., fourth paragraph.

implementation of the Transition Roadmap.[389] The Council further took note of the 5 October 2020 declaration by ECOWAS on the transitional arrangements and the lifting of sanctions and on the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council to lift its suspension of Mali from African Union activities.[390]

Table 1
Meetings: The situation in Mali

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8703 15 January 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2019/983)		Mali	Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations	13 Council members[a], all invitees[b]	
S/PV.8765 8 October 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Mali (S/2020/952)		Mali	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA).	11 Council members[c], all invitees[d]	
S/PV.8769 15 October 2020						S/PRST/2020/10
S/PV.8777 17 November 2020					Dominican Republic[e]	

[a] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, (also on behalf of South Africa and Tunisia), Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.
[b] Mali was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation who participated in the meeting by videoconference from Bamako.
[c] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam (on behalf of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations on the Council, namely, Indonesia and Viet Nam).
[d] The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA participated in the meeting by videoconference from Bamako.
[e] The representative of the Dominican Republic spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017).

[389] Ibid., second paragraph.
[390] Ibid.

Table 2
Videoconferences: The situation in Mali

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
7 April 2020	S/2020/286	Letter dated 9 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 June 2020	S/2020/541	Letter dated 15 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 June 2020	S/2020/625	Letter dated 30 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2531(2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/613 (Record of written procedure)
31 August 2020	S/2020/867	Letter dated 31 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2541(2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/854 (Record of written procedure)

Americas

13. The question concerning Haiti

During the period under review, the Security Council held two meetings and adopted one resolution in connection with the item entitled, "The question concerning Haiti". One meeting took the form of a briefing and the other meeting was convened for the adoption of a decision.[391] With the adoption of resolution 2547 (2020), the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) for a period of one year until 15 October 2021.[392] In addition, Council members held two open videoconferences under this item.[393] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and decisions, as well as the videoconferences is given in the tables below. In addition to meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.[394]

In 2020, the Council was briefed three times by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of BINUH, and once each by the Executive Director of Fondasyon Je Klere and the President of the Haitian Bars Federation. Discussions in the Council during this period focused on the mandate of BINUH and the political impasse in Haiti between the Government and the opposition, following the indefinite postponement of the legislative elections in October 2019.

In her briefing at the meeting held on 20 February 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General stated that the political impasse had paralyzed the functioning of Haitian institutions, aggrieved the country's economy and fueled continued insecurity. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General was working alongside the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States and the Apostolic Nuncio to Haiti to create an environment conducive to reaching a negotiated resolution which would ensure that the most vulnerable received much-needed basic services from the State and lay the groundwork for the timely holding of elections. Political actors had yet to settle on a formula that would lead to the

[391] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I. A.
[392] Resolution 2547 (2020), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of BINUH, see part X, sect. II.
[393] For information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[394] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 7.

designation of a consensual prime minister, the formation of a new Government and on the remaining length of the term of President Jovenel Moïse. Entering its second year with a caretaker Government, Haiti's economy was forecast to sink deeper into recession and 4.6 million citizens were estimated to require humanitarian assistance.

Making reference to the Secretary-General's report,[395] the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted that BINUH and the United Nations country team in Haiti developed an integrated strategic framework with a focused strategy aimed at assisting institutions to address the root causes of instability. She recalled that the collective success of the United Nations would be measured by the progress made on the six benchmarks, namely, facilitating a political consensus, addressing gang violence, strengthening the police, justice and corrections sectors, promoting human rights, helping address unemployment and socioeconomic grievances, and encouraging the presence of the State in communities through the provision of basic services and efforts to enhance resilience.[396]

At the open videoconference held on 19 June 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General informed Council members that the spread of COVID-19 pandemic was accelerating in Haiti and that its effects were only starting to be felt by its citizens, a majority of whom were already living in bleak socioeconomic conditions. As a result of the multiple, interconnected crises that had affected the country in recent years, Haiti's economy contracted 1.2 per cent in 2019 and was projected to shrink by a further 4 per cent in 2020. In the absence of adequate resources to support Haiti's emergence from the recession, the hard-won security and development gains achieved over the past decade and a half risked coming undone, and a primarily domestic problem transforming into a regional issue.

In terms of the security and political situation, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted a marked increase in the frequency and intensity of clashes between rival armed gangs in an effort to exert influence on the outcome of elections in the most populous neighborhoods of Port-au-Prince. Despite the call from parts of the opposition on Haitians to come together to face the pandemic, an initiative that allowed newly appointed Prime

[395] See S/2020/123.
[396] See S/PV.8729.

Minister Joseph Jouthe to govern, a growing number of opposition figures were contesting the length of the President Moïse's term in office and calling for a transitional administration to take over. She added that a reform of the Constitution was required to create the conditions for institutional stability, good governance and the rule of law. Through the use of good offices, BINUH had continued to encourage actors from across the political spectrum to constructively engage with one another. The Mission had further advised the Haitian National Police in the successful resolution of long-standing labour disputes within its ranks and assisted judicial actors in devising a virtual hearings system during the pandemic.[397]

On 5 October 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted the assassination of the President of the Port-au-Prince Bar Association on 28 August 2020 and the increasing prevalence of unrest, sometimes in the form of violent protests. Gangs continued to challenge the authority of the State, while a fringe group of disaffected police officers brought disorder to Port-au-Prince on several occasions. Although the Haitian National Police had consistently proven its operational proficiency, it required at least an additional 10,000 well-trained and well-equipped police officers to meet internationally accepted policing standards. Similarly, continued support, steadfast political resolve and decisive action was necessary to ensure that the National Commission for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, which was being operationalized, was capable of performing its tasks. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General stated that, as the country was preparing to enter a new electoral cycle, it was paramount that key aspects of the process, such as the electoral framework and calendar, were addressed to reduce the risk of contested elections and further violence. She urged Member States to amplify their support for a process that, if properly managed, would contribute to renewing Haiti's elected leadership, lead to a greater representation of women in political life and reinvigorate the social contract between Haitian citizens and the State.[398]

In her statement at the meeting on 20 February 2020, the Executive Director of Fondasyon Je Klere, a Haitian human rights organization which conducted human rights training, monitoring and inquiries with respect to public institutions, stated that Haiti was facing

[397] See S/2020/568.
[398] See S/2020/979.

widespread and systematic violations of human rights. She cited examples of violations of the right to life, physical integrity and dignity, with numerous accounts of killings, kidnappings, beheadings, rapes, diversion of supplies, abductions and forcible confinement committed by armed gangs. The Executive Director expressed the view that these crimes were being committed with the support, at least tacit, of the Government, while the perpetrators enjoyed official impunity. Drawing attention to the fight against corruption, she stressed the need for the implementation of law on wealth declaration and the holding of fair and equitable trials on the management of the PetroCaribe funds. The Executive Director called on the Council to support ensuring the success of the transition period in Haiti and a return to democratic order, weakening the firepower of armed gangs, the organization of trials in relation to PetroCaribe, the La Saline and Carrefour-Feuilles massacres and cases of rape, ending corruption, auditing the police with a view to boosting its credibility and ensuring that it could discharge its mission to protect and to serve.[399]

On 19 June 2020, the President of the Haitian Bars Federation pointed to a massive rise in human rights violations in Haiti, with the incident at La Saline in 2018 as one of many. According to the President of the Federation, the problem was primarily one of impunity, while the question of the involvement of the authorities was also raised in many reports, including those of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) and BINUH. These shortcomings were closely linked to the dysfunction in the justice system, while a perversion of the electoral process had led to interference, violence and the instrumentalization of power. In connection with the role of the United Nations in Haiti, the President of the Federation raised the question of reparation for the victims of the cholera tragedy and accountability for sexual abuse by peacekeepers. Regarding the mandate of BINUH, he noted that respect for human rights and supporting a weak State were conflicting mandates and cautioned that by linking its fate to the State, the Mission risked losing objectivity, even if only in the interpretation of indicators. The President of the Federation called for the strategy of

[399] See S/PV.8729.

continued international support to be revisited when there was a lack of national will, and stressed that civil society actors needed to be listened to and supported.[400]

In their discussions during the meeting and open videoconferences, Council members expressed concern regarding the continued political impasse in Haiti, increased levels of insecurity and human rights violations, including gang violence, as well as deteriorating humanitarian and socioeconomic conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Council members called on all political stakeholders to engage in an inclusive and open dialogue to define a calendar for legislative elections, leading to the formation of a new Government and constitutional reform. A number of Council members stressed the responsibility of the Haitian authorities for ensuring the security of their citizens and the rule of law and for addressing the underlying causes of instability.[401] Statements referred to the importance of full accountability for human rights violations, including the incidents at La Saline in 2018 and Bel Air in 2019,[402] and for corruption.[403] Some speakers welcomed the progress made in the professionalization of the Haitian National Police service, but noted that sustainable resources and increased capacity was required to enable it to function effectively.[404] The representatives of France, Tunisia, Germany and the United Kingdom recognized that the deployment of BINUH in 2019 was undertaken within particularly difficult circumstances in Haiti.[405] Council members commended and underscored the important work of the Mission in facilitating political dialogue and supporting justice and governance reforms. Recalling its disagreement with regard to the withdrawal of MINUJUSTH in the midst of a fragile elections process, the representative of the Dominican Republic expressed hope that the decision to do so, without an adequately equipped

[400] See S/2020/568.
[401] See S/PV.8729, United States, China, Viet Nam, Niger and Belgium; S/2020/568, Indonesia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; and S/2020/979, China, France, Indonesia and Viet Nam.
[402] See S/PV.8729, United States, Germany, Estonia and Belgium; and S/2020/568, Belgium, Estonia, France, United Kingdom and United States; S/2020/979, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Tunisia), and United States
[403] See S/PV.8729, United States, France, Tunisia, Germany, Estonia, and Belgium; and S/2020/979, France, Germany, and Indonesia.
[404] See S/PV.8729, United States, Tunisia, Germany, United Kingdom, Estonia, Indonesia) and Haiti; S/2020/568, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Tunisia), United States; and S/2020/979, Dominican Republic, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Tunisia), and United States.
[405] See S/PV.8729.

police force, would serve as a lesson to illustrate what the Council should not repeat in another country.[406]

On 15 October 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2547 (2020) by which it extended the existing mandate of BINUH for a period of one year until 15 October 2021.[407] The Council also reiterated the essential constitutional role of Haiti's Parliament and the urgent need for inclusive inter-Haitian national dialogue to address longstanding drivers of instability by creating a sustainable and commonly accepted framework to permit the organization of free, fair and transparent elections as soon as technically feasible.[408]

Resolution 2457 (2020) was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions of China and the Russian Federation. In the statement after the vote, the representative of China stated that, in adopting a mere technical rollover resolution, the Council had failed to demonstrate the importance it attached to the grim situation in Haiti. Moreover, the representative of China added that the draft did not take into account the constructive and highly consensual amendments proposed by his country's delegation related to human rights, reducing violence, protecting civilians, implementing good governance, combating corruption and conducting free, fair, transparent and credible presidential elections.[409] The representative of the Russian Federation added that the document failed to mention the most serious problems with violence vis-à-vis civilians, encroachment on human rights and corruption, and the need to respect the country's Constitution when adopting momentous decisions. While voting in favour of the resolution, the representative of the Dominican Republic expressed regret that Council members did not have a more extensive, cross-cutting and inclusive conversation in order to come up with a more robust multidimensional mandate for BINUH, including at least the strengthening of human rights safeguards and accountability. The representative of the United States maintained that the resolution ensured that BINUH had the mandate to continue efforts to support democratic institutions, strengthen the rule of law, promote stability and protect human rights, in partnership with the United States, Haiti's neighbors, the core group and the

[406] Ibid.
[407] Resolution 2547 (2020), para. 1.
[408] Ibid., third preambular paragraph.
[409] See S/PV.8768.

international community. The representative of France welcomed the fact that the resolution recalled the urgent need to engage in a nationwide dialogue in order to facilitate the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections.

Table 1
Meetings: The question concerning Haiti

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8729 20 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (S/2020/123)		Haiti	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, Executive Director of Fondasyon Je Klere	All Council members, all invitees[a]	
S/PV.8768 15 October 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (S/2020/944)	Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2020/1011)			Five Council members (China, Dominican Republic, France, Russian Federation, United States)	Resolution 2547 (2020) 15-0-2[b]

Table 2
Videoconferences: The question concerning Haiti

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
19 June 2020	S/2020/568	Letter dated 23 June 2020 from the President of the Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
5 October 2020	S/2020/979	Letter dated 7 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

14. 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 (S/2016/53)

During the period under review, the Security Council held three meetings and adopted one resolution under the item entitled "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 (S/2016/53)". More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is provided in table 1 below. Council members also held two open videoconferences in connection with this item.[410] More information on the videoconferences is provided in tables 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.[411]

In 2020, Council members received quarterly briefings under this item by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia further to the reports of the Secretary-General.[412] Council members were also briefed once by a member of the Municipal Association of Women and a consultant of the World Wildlife Fund. At the meetings and videoconferences, Colombia was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs in the meetings and videoconferences held during the period under review.

In his first briefing in 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General encouraged the parties to deepen their dialogue regarding any differences on the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, especially through the mechanisms designed by the Agreement itself, such as the Commission for the Follow-up, Promotion and Verification of the Implementation of the Final Agreement. He noted that social mobilizations had opened an opportunity for constructive dialogue on peace implementation. He also highlighted the adoption of the reintegration road map on 27 December

[410] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[411] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 41.
[412] S/2019/988, S/2020/603, S/2020/943 and S/2020/1301.

2019, establishing the framework for the long-term reintegration process and the approval of collective productive projects. [413]

In his subsequent briefings to the Council, the Special Representative stated that while some of the fundamental processes provided for in the peace agreement, such as the laying down of arms by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (FARC-EP) were complete and irreversible, others such as the reintegration of former combatants into civilian life, the search for truth, reparations and restorative justice for victims, and the transformation of rural Colombia were still under construction.[414]

In terms of achievements in reintegration, the Special Representative noted that the vast majority of former FARC-EP combatants remained engaged in the process, with nearly one third of them having received funding for productive projects.[415] He noted that many productive initiatives approved by the National Reintegration Committee had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, making it even more urgent to ensure their sustainability, including through technical assistance, the allocation of land and access to markets.[416]

The Special Representative described the insecurity facing former FARC-EP combatants, communities, human rights defenders and social leaders as the most serious threat to peacebuilding in Colombia. He expressed particular concern about the increased reports of gender-based violence in the context of the pandemic, as well as attacks on women social leaders, crop substitution leaders and former combatants in Putumayo department.[417] He called on all parties to redouble measures to improve protection for vulnerable groups.[418] The Special Representative also stressed the importance for the National Commission on Security Guarantees to finalize and implement the public policy to dismantle illegal armed groups, criminal organizations and support networks.[419] On transitional justice, the Special Representative highlighted the work of the Comprehensive System for Truth, Justice, Reparation and Non-

[413] See S/PV.8702.
[414] See S/2020/1023.
[415] Ibid.
[416] S/PV.8749.
[417] See S/2020/305 and S/PV.8749.
[418] Ibid.
[419] See S/2020/1023.

repetition such as the dialogue of the Truth Commission with Colombian civil society to foster reconciliation and to discuss the causes of the continued violence in several regions. He further noted that several top FARC party leaders had admitted responsibility for their role in crimes committed during the conflict.[420]

Beyond the peace agreement, during the open videoconference held on 14 April 2020, the Special Representative noted the decision of the National Liberation Army to declare a one-month unilateral ceasefire in April further to the appeal of the Secretary-General for a worldwide ceasefire in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.[421] In his remarks at the same videoconference, the consultant of the World Wildlife Fund and Colombian Ambassador for One Young World provided examples of the positive impact of the peace agreement such as the implementation of productive projects for former combatants and their communities. The main challenges to the peace process included the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing violence against social leaders, and the absence of the State in rural communities, leaving the vacuum to be filled by drug cartels and illegal armed groups. He also called on all actors to make real efforts to implement the gender provisions of the peace agreement.[422]

In her briefing to the Council on 14 July 2020, a member of the Municipal Association of Women and defender of Afro-Colombian territorial and human rights stated that attacks on leaders and human rights defenders in Colombia stood as proof of how communities, particularly women, were enduring a profound violation of the right to life as a consequence of armed conflict, the absence of a State presence in their territories, and a militaristically-focused intervention as a response by the Government. She demanded from President Iván Duque Márquez of Colombia the full implementation in the territories of the comprehensive programmes on security and protection for communities with differential gender and ethnic approaches, compliance with the peace agreement in a comprehensive manner, the investigation and prosecution of the material and intellectual authors of violations of human rights, the structural transformation of rural Colombia, integrating regions, eradicating poverty and ensuring the rights of all citizens and for the Government to make peace a priority in the country's public

[420] Ibid.
[421] See S/2020/305.
[422] Ibid.

agenda. She called on the international community to encourage armed actors to agree on a humanitarian agreement to, inter alia, respect human rights and territorial autonomy, protect communities and visit the territories, assist peacebuilding initiatives including with political commitment, and promote the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) to strengthen the participation, protection and leadership of women and youth in building and maintaining peace.[423]

Discussions in the Council during the period under review focused on the status of the implementation of the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace, signed between the Government of Colombia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia – People's Army (FARC-EP) in 2016. Council members expressed deep concern about the rising number of attacks and killings of former FARC combatants, community and social leaders and human rights defenders, including women, members of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, and other vulnerable groups. They called for the greater protection of former combatants and vulnerable groups through the approval of protection requests by the National Protection Unit, the implementation of the policy to dismantle illegal armed groups by the National Commission on Security Guarantees, and for the greater presence of State authority in affected areas.

Speakers underscored the importance of further progress on rural reform and development, countering illicit drugs, including crop substitution. Speakers further discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the peace agreement, including the humanitarian, socioeconomic and security challenges the virus posed in Colombia. In this regard, while noting the one-month ceasefire announced by the National Liberation Army at the start of the pandemic in April 2020, Council members underscored the importance of the complete cessation of hostilities between the armed groups and the Government.[424] Speakers further expressed their full support for the work of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia in support of the peace agreement, with several of them also expressing support for the possible

[423] See S/PV.8749.
[424] See S/2020/305, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, (speaking on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Tunisia) and United Kingdom.

amendment of its mandate to include the verification of the implementation of sanctions imposed by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.[425]

On 25 September 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2545 (2020), welcoming the progress made towards peace since the adoption of the peace agreement, and urging the parties to work together to sustain progress and address challenges, in particular the continued violence in conflict-affected areas.[426] The Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia for a period of one year until 25 September 2021.[427] In addition, recalling that the peace agreement envisaged a role for the Mission in verifying compliance with the sentences of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace, the Council expressed its readiness to consider, in a timely manner, the addition of this task to the mandate.[428]

Table 1
Meetings: 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 (S/2016/53)

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8702 13 January 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2019/988)		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia	All Council members, all invitees[a]	
S/PV.8749 14 July 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (S/2020/603)		Colombia	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Member of the Municipal Association of Women and defender of Afro-Colombian territorial and human rights	12 Council members[b], all invitees[c]	

[425] See S/2020/1023, Belgium, France, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Colombia.
[426] Resolution 2545 (2020), third preambular paragraph.
[427] Ibid., fifth preambular paragraph and para. 1.
[428] Ibid., para. 3. For more information on the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, see part X, sect. II.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8760 25 September 2020		Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/937)	Colombia			Resolution 2545 (2020) 15-0-0 (S/2020/917) (Record of written procedure)

[a] Colombia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.
[b] The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines spoke on behalf of Niger, South Africa and Tunisia.
[c] The representative of Colombia and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General participated in the meeting via videoconference from Bogotá. The member of the Municipal Associate of Women and defender of Afro-Colombian. territorial and human rights participated in the meeting via videoconference from Cauca.

Table 2
Videoconferences: 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 (S/2016/53)

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
14 April 2020	S/2020/305	Letter dated 26 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
14 October 2020	S/2020/1023	Letter dated 16 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

15. The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

During the period under review, the Security Council did not hold any meetings or adopt any decisions in connection with the item entitled "The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela". Nevertheless, Council members held one open videoconference in connection with this item on 20 May 2020. More information on the videoconference is provided in the table below.[429]

During the open videoconference, Council members were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on the political and humanitarian situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.[430] At the outset of the videoconference, the Under-Secretary-General recalled the letter dated 13 May 2020 addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Council in which the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela alleged that on 3 and 4 May 2020 armed groups of mercenaries and terrorists, organized, trained, financed and protected by the Governments of the Republic of Colombia and the United States of America, had illegally entered the Venezuelan territory with the involvement of an extremist sector of the Venezuelan opposition.[431] Colombia, the United States, as well as the Venezuelan opposition, had rejected the allegations of their involvement. The Under-Secretary-General recalled the statement of the Secretary-General on 4 May 2020 that the United Nations stood against any escalation of the situation, and that the only way to resolve it was through political dialogue and full respect for human rights.

The Under-Secretary-General updated Council members on what she described as a deepening protracted crisis in the country, noting the suspension of discussions between lawmakers from the Government and the opposition on the modalities for the holding of presidential and legislative elections. The Under-Secretary-General also expressed concern regarding the politicization of humanitarian aid, the operational constraints imposed by fuel shortages, and reports of human rights violations in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

[429] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[430] See S/2020/435.
[431] See S/2020/399.

Moreover, the Under-Secretary-General stated that the economic sanctions imposed on the country were exacerbating an already critical situation. In this regard, she recalled the appeal of the Secretary-General for the waiving of sanctions that could undermine the capacity of countries to respond to the pandemic and the call of the High Commissioner for Human Rights for humanitarian exemptions to such measures to be given broad and practical effect. She also recalled the support expressed by the Secretary-General for a negotiated solution to the crisis and his offer of good offices, concluding that an agreement that strengthened democratic governance, with full respect for human rights, was more urgent than ever.[432]

In connection with the information presented in the letter from the Permanent Representative of Venezuela, participants expressed diverging views. While the representatives of the United Kingdom, United States and Colombia rejected the allegations in the letter regarding the involvement of the Governments of the United States and Colombia, the representative of the Russian Federation described the allegations contained in the letter as a clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela urged the Council to recognize the acts of aggression and demand that the perpetrators immediately bring to an end the use of force and the commission of further attacks. Several Council members also shared their views regarding the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States[433] and the prohibition on the use of force.[434] The representative of the Russian Federation presented a draft Council press statement prepared by his delegation which, inter alia, rejected the use or threat of use of force, reaffirmed relevant resolutions on the condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and on the use of mercenaries. The draft press statement further called for the current situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to be resolved through a dialogue by Venezuelans, without interference, and through peaceful and political means.[435]

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[432] S/2020/435.
[433] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Indonesia and South Africa.
[434] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Viet Nam. For more information on the principle of the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state under Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations, see part III, sect. II.
[435] Ibid.

Most Council members expressed the view that only a peaceful political dialogue would resolve the crisis in the country.[436] Several Council members further called for a peaceful democratic transition in the country,[437] as well as the conduct of transparent, free and fair presidential and legislative elections.[438] Council members expressed concern regarding the humanitarian situation, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, with several of them also condemning the politicization of humanitarian assistance.[439] Some Council members expressed concern regarding the increase in human rights violations.[440] Several Council members deplored the humanitarian and socioeconomic impact of sanctions measures imposed on the country,[441] while the representatives of France and Germany maintained that the sanctions measures imposed by the European Union did not impede international humanitarian assistance.[442] The representative of Indonesia expressed regret at the lack of unity in the Council to move forward to address the situation in the country, including its already dire humanitarian challenges.[443]

Videoconferences: The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
20 May 2020	S/2020/435	Letter dated 22 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[436] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.
[437] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, and Germany.
[438] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, France and Germany.
[439] Ibid., Belgium, France and Germany.
[440] Ibid., Estonia, France and Germany.
[441] Ibid., Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Viet Nam.
[442] Ibid., France and Germany.
[443] Ibid.

Asia

16. The situation in Afghanistan

During the period under review, the Security Council held two meetings under this item. Both were convened to adopt a resolution, namely, resolutions 2513 (2020) and 2543 (2020), the second of which was adopted to extend the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA).[444] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held a total of four videoconferences in connection the situation in Afghanistan.[445]More information on videoconferences is provided in table 2 below.

During the year 2020, at several videoconferences, Council members were briefed quarterly by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA and the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Officer in Charge of UNAMA, further to the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan.[446] The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and her Deputy discussed in their briefings the outcome of the presidential election of September 2019, the developments in the peace process further to resolution 2513 (2020), and the security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.[447] Council members were also briefed by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), and the Afghan Youth Representative to the United Nations.[448] In addition, in a videoconference held on 3 September 2020, Council members heard a briefing by the Chief Executive of MOBY Group.[449] In addition to the briefers,

[444] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II. A.
[445] For information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[446] See S/2020/210, S/2020/549, S/2020/809 and S/2020/1182.
[447] See S/2020/274, S/2020/597, S/2020/891, S/2020/1274.
[448] See S/2020/597 and S/2020/1274.
[449] See S/2020/891.

the representatives of Afghanistan and Iran delivered a statement at one of the videoconferences.[450]

On 10 March 2020, the Council held a meeting at which it unanimously adopted resolution 2513 (2020) welcoming the Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan (Joint Declaration) and the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the United States of America and the Taliban.[451] In the resolution, the Council urged the Government of Afghanistan to advance the peace process, including by participating in intra-Afghan negotiations through a diverse and inclusive negotiating team composed of Afghan political and civil society leaders, including women.[452] The Council called on the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban to pursue in good faith additional confidence building measures to create conditions conducive to a swift beginning and the success of intra-Afghan negotiations and a durable peace.[453] Furthermore, the Council requested the Secretary-General to include in his quarterly reports on Afghanistan, as requested in paragraph 9 of resolution 2489 (2019), developments related to the efforts set out in the resolution.[454]

After the vote, the representative of the United States expressed regret that the presidential electoral process and the high levels of violence by the Taliban had delayed the start of the intra-Afghan negotiations. She stated that the United States would carefully monitor and assess whether the Taliban lived up to its commitments and urged the Taliban to also reduce violence against Afghan forces. She also stressed that her country would continue to support the goal of a lasting peace in Afghanistan and hoped that other Council members would join in doing so as well.[455] Other Council members acknowledged the importance of including language in the resolution in relation to the meaningful and effective participation of women in the peace process.[456] As an expression of their responsibility as co-penholders together with Indonesia, the

[450] See S/2020/1274. See also SC/14391.
[451] Resolution 2513 (2020), para. 1. See also S/2020/184 and S/2020/185.
[452] Resolution 2513 (2020), para. 4.
[453] Ibid., para. 5.
[454] Ibid., para. 9.
[455] See S/PV.8742.
[456] Ibid., Germany and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

representative of Germany affirmed that the two countries were united in their determination to ensure that the Security Council continued to closely follow and support the peace process in Afghanistan. He also added that he would have welcomed in the resolution clear references to the Afghan Constitution as well as to human rights and the importance of respecting such rights in general, which he said remained the indispensable basis for the future development of the country. The representative of the Russian Federation affirmed that the resolution opened up a window of opportunity for the achievement of national reconciliation in Afghanistan and added that one of the prerequisites for the long-term stabilization of the country was the review of the sanctions decisions taken by the Council vis-à-vis the Taliban movement and their synchronization with the relevant national measures.

On 31 March 2020, at a videoconference, the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported that while the Independent Election Commission had declared President Ashraf Ghani as the winner of the presidential election, his runner-up, Mr. Abdullah Abdullah, had rejected the outcome and unilaterally claimed victory, prompting serious concern over the future of the country.[457] Despite this political impasse, the Deputy Special Representative reported that the Afghan establishment had been able to agree on a diverse negotiating team for potential intra-Afghan talks. Notwithstanding the logistical challenges imposed by COVID-19, representatives of Afghanistan and the Taliban had held three video-teleconferences to discuss prisoner releases, an important confidence-building measure to start the peace process. The Deputy Special Representative further briefed the Council on the signing of the agreement between the United States and the Taliban on 29 February 2020, which provided for the conditions-based full withdrawal of international military forces from Afghanistan, and the commitment for the Taliban to reduce violence against international military forces. Regarding the security situation, the Deputy Special Representative noted an increased level of violence and expressed concern about the ongoing threat to civilians posed by the Islamic State-Khorasan Province. On the humanitarian situation, she highlighted the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire so that the necessary resources could be provided to combating COVID-19, which was of particular concern given Afghanistan's

[457] See S/2020/274.

fragile health system, its highly vulnerable population and the economic and social impact of the loss of livelihoods.

During her first briefing to Council members on 25 June 2020, the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General welcomed the political agreement between President Ghani and Mr. Abdullah. She expressed cautious optimism on the start of the talks between Afghanistan and the Taliban, noting that both sides had agreed that talks could start within a week of the completion of prisoner releases.[458] The Special Representative welcomed brief respites from the spiralling levels of violence following the United States-Taliban agreement and a three-day ceasefire for Eid Al-Fitr by the Taliban and the Government, and stressed the importance of a reduction of violence to create an environment conducive for peace talks. Regarding the humanitarian situation, the Special Representative noted that the humanitarian response plan had been updated to incorporate the COVID-19 requirements for 2020, reflecting a total of $1.1 billion to provide immediate humanitarian assistance. Following the Special Representative's briefing, the Executive Director of UNODC reported on the findings of the UNODC World Drug Report 2020, which showed that Afghanistan remained the world's biggest producer of opium despite the COVID-19 pandemic and that drug use in the country was exacerbated by the availability of trafficked weapons supporting the drug trade and terrorism. The Executive Director described synthetic drugs as a new danger to the country and the region, and highlighted that COVID-19 could further drive illicit opium-poppy cultivation. During the same videoconference, the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission briefed the Council on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the human rights situation in Afghanistan and on the role of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in the Afghan peace process. The Chairperson described the Commission's work on the peace process which was focused on contributing to an inclusive process, a durable outcome and mechanisms for the preservation and expansion of human rights.

On 3 September 2020, Council members held a videoconference at which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported that pre-talks had started between representatives of Afghanistan and representatives of the Taliban. She called that a historic

[458] See S/2020/597.

moment and expressed hope that the following days would bring the formal launch of the intra-Afghan negotiations.[459] Noting the continuing high level of violence in the country, she hoped that a humanitarian ceasefire would be one of the first items on the agenda of those negotiations. She added that one of the flagship issues for the United Nations in achieving a sustainable peace would be the role of human rights, and stressed the importance of women's representation at the peace table. Noting the importance of strong and trusted public institutions, the Special Representative welcomed the Government's announcement of the formation of its cabinet and of appointments to the High Council for National Reconciliation. On the humanitarian front, the Special Representative reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had hit Afghanistan hard with millions of Afghans having suffered lost income and livelihoods. Council members also heard a briefing by Saad Mohseni, the Chief Executive of MOBY Group. Mr. Mohseni spoke about the media and news sector, the freedom of the press and the safety of journalists in Afghanistan. He presented his views on how the Council and the international community could support the peace process.

In addition to resolution 2513 (2020), on 15 September 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2543 (2020), by which it extended the mandate of UNAMA for 12 months until 17 September 2021.[460] By the resolution, the Council welcomed UNAMA's ongoing efforts in the implementation of the mandated tasks, priorities and related resources of UNAMA especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.[461] Specifically, the Council decided that UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General would continue to lead and coordinate the international civilian efforts with a particular focus on a series of priorities including good offices in support of the peace process, elections support, governance, regional cooperation, human rights and accountability and the protection of civilians, especially women, children, displaced persons and minorities.[462] Welcoming the start of intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha on 12 September 2020, the Council also strongly encouraged the negotiating parties to continue pursuing confidence-building measures, including additional reductions in violence, and

[459] See S/2020/891.
[460] Resolution 2543 (2020), para. 5.
[461] Ibid., para. 3.
[462] Ibid., para. 6. For more information on the mandate of UNAMA, see part X, sect. II.

encouraged them to engage in good faith. The Council also called for the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire as supported in resolution 2532 (2020) and emphasized the importance of the implementation of resolution 2513 (2020).[463]

Further to the vote, Council members welcomed the unanimous adoption of the resolution given the initiation of intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha on 12 September 2020. The representatives of Germany and Indonesia as co-penholders emphasized that the resolution sent a strong signal of international unity.[464] Council members offered their views on the necessary elements to achieve peace and stability, such as human rights,[465] including women's participation, a reduction of violence and improved security[466] and socioeconomic development.[467] In that regard, the representative of China added that through his country's promotion of the Belt and Road Initiative, China remained committed to helping Afghanistan forge closer trade and economic ties with countries of the region, especially its neighbours. The representative of the United States commended the penholders for their cooperative spirit but clarified that the United States would have serious concerns if, contrary to their understanding, UNAMA were to interpret resolution 2543 (2020) to mandate UNAMA to support illegitimate investigation of International Criminal Court (ICC) against United States personnel. In that regard, he reiterated that the United States was not a party to the Rome Statute and had consistently rejected ICC's assertions of jurisdiction over United States personnel, affirming that his country would not tolerate any attempts to subject Americans to the ICC's jurisdiction.

During her last briefing of the year, in a videoconference held on 17 December 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General welcomed progress in the talks between Afghanistan and the Taliban. She reported having met with women negotiators on her recent trips to Doha and again underlined the importance of including women, young people, minorities, victims of conflict and religious leaders in the peace process. Taking note of the recent formation of the High Council for National Reconciliation allowing Afghanistan to

[463] Resolution 2543 (2020), paras. 3 and 4.
[464] See S/PV.8759.
[465] Ibid., Indonesia, France, Estonia, and Dominican Republic.
[466] Ibid., France and Estonia.
[467] Ibid., Estonia and China.

establish a broad base for consolidating its negotiating positions, she invited the Taliban to also broaden its consultations with Afghan constituencies.[468] The Special Representative reiterated the importance of stability and cooperation in the region and highlighted regional efforts on counter-narcotics and transnational organized crime including discussions within the UNODC regional Steering Committee. Reporting on the security situation, the Special Representative shared a sense of violence and insecurity being higher than ever in Afghanistan. She called upon the Government of Afghanistan to take effective measures to protect the media and journalists, and upon the Taliban to refrain from attacking civilian targets. In closing, the Special Representative reported on the devastating humanitarian effects of COVID-19, including hunger and malnutrition and the erosion of livelihoods with women and children particularly affected. She shared that the larger United Nations family had scaled up to ensure that work was getting done to respond to the pandemic in coordination with the Government and civil society. She noted that the year 2020 had brought a profound shift in the country with the United States-Taliban agreement, the United States-Afghan Government joint declaration, three months of intra-Afghan negotiations, the renewal of pledges from international donors and a revitalized regional cooperation effort. Following the Special Representative's briefing, Council members heard briefings from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) and the Afghan Youth Representative to the United Nations. While expressing optimism about the ongoing negotiations in Doha, the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011) highlighted two key challenges reflected in the latest report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team,[469] namely, the continuous close relations between the Taliban and Al-Qaida, and the Taliban's ongoing profiting from narcotics.

In her briefing, the Afghan Youth Representative told the Council about the young students, journalists, human rights activists and security forces who had lost their lives to terrorism and called for an end to the "daily slaughter of young Afghans".

[468] See S/2020/1274.
[469] See S/2020/415.

She also called for the inclusion of young Afghans in an Afghan-owned peace process taking place in Afghanistan without the interference of foreigners.

In 2020, Council members' discussions focused on the outcome of the presidential election, the peace process, and the security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Council members specifically reiterated their support for an inclusive Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process[470] and welcomed the launch of the intra-Afghan negotiations[471] and the first agreements on the rules and procedures for the negotiations thereunder.[472] Council members also urged that the progress made in guaranteeing fundamental rights especially for women under the Afghan Constitution be protected.[473] Council members also expressed concern over the compounding impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing and escalating violence in Afghanistan and called for all parties to heed to the Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.[474] They called for the international community to increase their support for Afghanistan including through UNAMA to ensure continued delivery of humanitarian aid to the population facing the impact of the pandemic.[475]

Developments in Afghanistan were also considered elsewhere under the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts".[476]

Table 1
Meetings: The situation in Afghanistan

[470] See S/2020/274, China Germany, Indonesia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, South Africa, Viet Nam; S/2020/597, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United States and Viet Nam.
[471] See S.PV.8759, Germany, Indonesia, Estonia, China, Belgium, S/2020/1274, China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Viet Nam.
[472] See S/2020/1274, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
[473] See S/2020/274 Belgium, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Niger, South Africa and United States; S/2020/597, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Indonesia, Tunisia; S/2020/1274, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Niger, South Africa and United Kingdom.
[474] See S/2020/274, Belgium, France, Germany, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom and Viet Nam; S/2020/597, France, Germany, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam; S/2020/1274, China, Estonia, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.
[475] See S/2020/274, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam; S/2020/597, Dominican Republic, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and (Viet Nam; S/2020/1274, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, United States and Viet Nam.
[476] See part I, sect. 29.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8742 10 March 2020		Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2020/191)			13 Council members[a]	Resolution 2513 (2020) 15-0-0
S/PV.8759 15 September 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for peace and security (S/2020/809)	Draft resolution submitted by Germany and Indonesia (S/2020/903)	Afghanistan		Nine Council members[b], all invitees	Resolution 2543 (2020) 15-0-0

a Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.
b Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Tunisia and United States.

Table 2
Videoconferences: The situation in Afghanistan

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
31 March 2020	S/2020/274	Letter dated 31 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
25 June 2020	S/2020/597	Letter dated 29 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
3 September 2020	S/2020/891	Letter dated 8 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
17 December 2020	S/2020/1274	Letter dated 22 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Europe

17. The situation in Cyprus

During the year 2020, the Security Council held three meetings, adopted two resolutions and issued one presidential statement concerning the situation in Cyprus. All three meetings were held for the adoption of a decision.[477] More information on the meetings, including on invitees, speakers and outcomes is given in the table below. Council members also held a private meeting and a closed videoconference with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to resolution 1353 (2001).[478] In addition to meetings and videoconferences, Council members also held informal consultations of the whole to discuss the situation in Cyprus.[479]

On 30 January 2020, further to the reports of the Secretary-General,[480] the Council held a meeting at which it unanimously adopted resolution 2506 (2020), extending the mandate of UNFICYP for a period of six months, until 31 July 2020.[481] In the resolution, the Council expressed concern at the deterioration of the law and order situation in Pyla, and urged both sides to continue to work with UNFICYP to establish effective measures to tackle criminal activities.[482] The Council welcomed the trilateral meeting of the leaders and the Secretary-General held on 25 November 2019 in Berlin, at which both sides reaffirmed their commitment to a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality.[483]

Recalling its resolution 2483 (2019), the Council called upon the two leaders to, inter alia, reaffirm their political support for all Technical Committees and improve their performance.[484] The Council also called for the establishment of an effective mechanism for

[477] For further information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[478] The private meeting was held on 16 January and the closed videoconference on 16 July in connection with 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"; see S/PV.8705 and S/2021/9.
[479] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 1. See also S/2020/258.
[480] See S/2019/883 and S/2020/23.
[481] Resolution 2506 (2020), para. 10. For further information on the mandate of UNFICYP, see part X, sect. I.
[482] Resolution 2506 (2020), eighth preambular paragraph.
[483] Ibid., para. 1.
[484] Ibid., para. 5.

direct military contacts between the sides and the relevant involved parties, and urged UNFICYP, as facilitator through its liaison role, to submit proposals in that regard.[485] In addition, the Council expressed serious concern at the increased number of violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines, and called on the sides and all involved parties to respect the mandated authority of UNFICYP in the buffer zone.[486] The Council also requested the Secretary-General to submit by 10 July 2020 a report on his Good Offices, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting-point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement and a report on the implementation of the resolution.[487]

On 25 July 2020, further to the report of the Secretary-General,[488] the Council adopted resolution 2537 (2020), extending the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, until 31 January 2021.[489] On the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council recognised its impact on the island as well as the efforts made by both communities to suppress the spread of the virus and mitigate its effects.[490] The Council also recognised that the COVID-19 pandemic had restricted opportunities and capacity for negotiation, while expressing concern that the uncoordinated decisions to close the crossing points along the Green line in response to the pandemic had prevented most bi-communal engagement, and that the prolonged closure of the crossing points threatened to set back the progress made since 2003.[491] Recalling its resolution 2506 (2020), the Council called on the two leaders to ensure effective coordination and cooperation on health matters, including in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other infectious diseases which had island-wide implications, including through the effective use of the expertise available in the bi-communal Technical Committees on Health, Crisis Management, Humanitarian Affairs and Economic Matters.[492] While noting that the opening of the crossings since 2003 had been an important confidence-building measure between both communities and one which was essential for the settlement process, the Council also called for the reopening of all the crossing points and

[485] Ibid., para. 6.
[486] Ibid., para.11.
[487] Ibid., para. 17.
[488] See S/2020/682.
[489] Resolution 2537 (2020), para. 11.
[490] Ibid., eighth preambular paragraph.
[491] Ibid., ninth preambular paragraph.
[492] Ibid., para. 5(c).

the return to the operating status that existed prior to 29 February 2020 as soon as practically achievable, and for any continuing restrictions on movement across the island to prevent the spread of COVID-19 to be coordinated, and not go beyond what was necessary to protect public health.[493] Furthermore, the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit by 10 January 2021 a report on his Good Offices, in particular on progress towards reaching a consensus starting point for meaningful results-oriented negotiations leading to a settlement and to also submit a report on implementation of the resolution.[494]

On 9 October 2020, at its 8766th meeting, the Council issued a presidential statement,[495] by which it reaffirmed the status of Varosha as set out in previous Council resolutions, including resolutions 550 (1984) and 789 (1992) and reiterated that no actions should be carried out in relation to Varosha that were not in accordance with those resolutions.[496] The Council expressed its deep concern regarding the announcement in Ankara on 6 October to open the coastline of Varosha and called for the reversal of that course of action, and for the avoidance of any unilateral actions that could raise tensions on the island.[497] The Council also stressed the importance of full respect and implementation of its resolutions, while reaffirming its commitment to an enduring, comprehensive and just settlement in accordance with the wishes of the Cypriot people, and based on a bicommunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Council resolutions. In that regard, the Council called on the Cypriot sides and the Guarantor Powers to engage in dialogue constructively and with a sense of urgency following the electoral process in the Turkish Cypriot community.[498] The Council further reiterated its support for the Secretary-General, including his intention to convene a meeting as agreed between the Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot leaders in their meeting with the Secretary-General in November 2019.[499]

Meetings: The situation in Cyprus

[493] Ibid., para. 8.
[494] Ibid., para. 18.
[495] S/PRST/2020/9.
[496] Ibid., first paragraph.
[497] Ibid., second paragraph.
[498] Ibid., third and fourth paragraphs.
[499] Ibid., fifth paragraph.

Meeting and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8709 30 January 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2020/23)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/78)				Resolution 2506 (2020) 15-0-0
S/PV.8751 28 July 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus (S/2020/682) Report of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus (S/2020/685)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/741)				Resolution 2537 (2020) 15-0-0
S/PV.8766 9 October 2020						S/PRST/2020/9

18. Items relating to the situation in the former Yugoslavia
A. The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During 2020, the members of the Security Council held two open videoconferences and adopted one resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter in connection with the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[500] At the two open videoconferences Council members heard briefings by the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the participation of the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia as well as the representative of the European Union. At the first open videoconference of the year, Council members also heard a briefing by the Executive Director of Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below.

In his briefings to the Council in 2020, the High Representative provided updates on developments further to his two reports for the year.[501] On 6 May 2020, the High Representative reported that while both the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska had taken early measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic, the country had ultimately not succeeded in establishing a functional coordination mechanism to address the crisis and its economic consequences. He added that the Bosnian authorities had so far failed to reach a political agreement on the distribution of financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund, and that the greatest challenge for the country was to minimize the risks of corruption related to the management of international financial and material assistance. The High Representative also acknowledged the latest actions taken by the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding the country's application for European Union membership as a reaffirmation of its commitment and as a strategic foreign policy goal. He expressed concern that some political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina would return to the pre-pandemic status quo, in

[500] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[501] See S/2020/345 and S/2020/1052.

which decision-making at the State level had been blocked by parties of the governing coalition in Republika Srpska. In that regard, he reported that while the Republika Srpska Government had been appointed quickly in 2018, the new Federation Government had not yet been appointed due to one political party's continued conditioning of the establishment of the Government to changes to the election law. The High Representative reported on the several challenges the Central Election Commission was facing concerning the municipal elections scheduled for October 2020, due to the lack of funding, pandemic restrictions and the refusal by some political parties to cooperate with the Commission. He also added that the ruling of the European Court of Human Rights in the *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* case, as well as other related human rights judgments remained unimplemented after more than 10 years. In reference to the several upcoming anniversaries later in the year, including the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, he called for legally regulating the issue of genocide denial and holocaust denial. He also made reference to the 20th anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), and called on the authorities to do more to address gender inequality. On the 25th anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Dayton in November 2020, he called for the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with the international community, to recommit to preserving the Dayton structure through strengthening the State-level institutions and the competences they had assumed.[502]

At the same videoconference, Council members also heard a briefing by the Executive Director of Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Executive Director argued that 25 years after the Dayton Agreement, the conflict had been transferred onto the political stage and that the lack of investment in the development of the country and economy, education and culture directly affected Bosnia and Herzegovina's ordinary citizens. With the highest percentage of youth unemployment in Europe and a growing number of young people emigrating, she added that there was an urgent need for reforms and investment, as well as to update the Dayton Agreement.[503]

[502] See S/2020/379.
[503] Ibid.

Council members commended the coordination and cooperation demonstrated by the political and institutional leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and hoped that such cooperation would contribute to the reconciliation in the country. Regarding institutional reforms, Council members stressed the need for their implementation in the rule of law, socioeconomic and electoral law fronts. In the context of the municipal elections slated to take place in October 2020, a number of delegations highlighted the issue of the city of Mostar, where elections had not taken place since 2008.[504]

Several speakers also shared the High Representative's concerns with regard to the decision-making blocking at the State level by some parties of the governing coalition.[505] Looking ahead to the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in July 2020, a number of speakers expressed concern about the denial of genocide.[506] In this regard, the representative of Belgium added that war criminals must be held accountable, and that impunity was not acceptable. The representative of the Russian Federation regretted to observe that the quality of the High Representative's reports had not improved and that due to the bias against Bosnian Serbs, the report did not give a balanced picture of the situation on the ground. He highlighted disagreement with specific aspects of the report, including the alleged stagnation and rollbacks in the implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, including the five objectives and two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, and called on the Security Council and the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council to take the necessary steps for the early closure of the Office.

In his second briefing to the Council, on 5 November 2020, the High Representative reflected on the 25th Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement arguing that while it had been a solid framework for future development of Bosnia and Herzegovina, some politicians had regrettably used the goodwill of the international community to reinvigorate nationalistic and divisive policies. In that sense, he regretted the continuous divisive rhetoric and lack of reforms implementation as well as blockages of institutions at the State and Federation levels. The High

[504] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Niger, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Croatia and Croatia.
[505] Ibid., Estonia, France, Indonesia and United Kingdom.
[506] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and European Union.

Representative also noted the adoption in September 2020 of the Revised War Crimes Processing Strategy 2020 by the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers, by which the most serious war crimes cases should be prioritized for prosecution and completion by 2023. He expressed hope that coordination, cooperation and a disciplined approach by the judicial institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina would determine the success of the new strategy. In the context of the local elections re-scheduled to take place in mid-November 2020, the High Representative expressed concern with the continuation of the divisive rhetoric in the election campaigns. Given such rhetoric, he affirmed that the continued presence of the European Union-led military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUFOR ALTHEA, remained necessary. He also expressed gratitude and support to the Central Election Commission for having organized the elections under extraordinary circumstances, also preparing for the Local Elections in the City of Mostar on 20 December 2020, the first such elections in the city since 2008. Finally, the High Representative regretted that besides the adoption of the Revised War Crimes Processing Strategy, little progress had been made on the implementation of the five objectives and two conditions to be fulfilled for the closure of his Office. He closed his remarks by urging the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement the national action plan 2018 to 2022 on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and regretted that while women were at the core of ensuring socioeconomic stability in the country, they were marginalized in political decision-making.[507]

During the meeting, Council members welcomed the agreements on electoral law reached in June 2020 between the Bosniak and Croatian representatives, which would allow for local elections to be held in the city of Mostar in December 2020. Most speakers echoed the concerns of the High Representative and called on the political actors to refrain from the continuing divisive rhetoric.[508] Several Council members also continued to condemn the glorification of war criminals and denial of genocide.[509] In that connection, some Council members welcomed the adoption of the Revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy, stressing the need for its

[507] See S/2020/1103.
[508] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Serbia.
[509] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.

implementation.[510] Marking the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Accords, a number of Council members reflected on the achievements and remaining challenges for peace and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.[511] The representative of the Russian Federation again regretted that the briefing by the High Representative painted a subjective picture of the situation in Bosnia Herzegovina and asked the High Representative to endeavour in the future to make his reports more balanced and objective. He added that the time was right to consider the conditions and criteria for closing the Office of the High Representative and proposed exchanging opinions on that issue during the meeting of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board, which was scheduled for December 2020.[512]

On the same day, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2549 (2020), under Chapter VII of the Charter. By the resolution, the Council renewed the authorization of the multinational stabilization force (European Union Force – EUFOR ALTHEA) and the continued presence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization in the country for a period of 12 months, starting from the date of the adoption of that resolution.[513] By the resolution, the Council also urged the parties to proceed with the formation of the governments at Federation and cantonal levels and to prioritize the implementation of comprehensive reforms in a manner which benefitted all citizens, and further called on the parties to refrain from any polarizing unconstructive policy, action and rhetoric.[514]

Videoconferences: The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

[510] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, South Africa and European Union.
[511] Ibid. Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and European Union.
[512] Ibid.
[513] Resolution 2549 (2020), paras 3 and 4. For more information, see part VIII, sect. III.
[514] Ibid., paras. 8 and 9.

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
6 May 2020	S/2020/379	Letter dated 8 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
5 November 2020	S/2020/1103	Letter dated 10 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
5 November 2020	S/2020/1087	Letter dated 5 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2549 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/1085 (Record of written procedure)

B. Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999)

During the period under review, the members of the Security Council held two open videoconferences in connection with Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999).[515] In a note by the President dated 7 February 2019,[516] the Council expressed its intent to hold briefings on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) three times in 2019 and, as from 2020, to hold briefings twice a year, in April and October.[517] Consistent with the note, at the two open videoconferences in 2020, Council members heard two briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, further to the Secretary-General's reports pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999).[518] In line with established practice, statements were also delivered by the representatives of Serbia and Kosovo during the two videoconferences.[519] No decisions were adopted in connection with this item during the period under review. More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below.

The briefings of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General focused on the latest developments on the ground, particularly on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Kosovo as well as on the progress made in the relations between Pristina and Belgrade during the reporting period.

On 24 April 2020, the Special Representative stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had been an unprecedented challenge for Kosovo and for the region and a reminder that such challenges could be resolved only through regional cooperation. In that regard, he outlined the measures that had been put in place to curtail the spread of the disease and how UNMIK was working closely with the local public health authorities and with international partners in fighting

[515] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[516] See S/2019/120.
[517] See S/2020/339 and S/2020/1040.
[518] See S/2020/255 and S/2020/964.
[519] Serbia was represented by its First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

the pandemic.[520] While regretting that political divisions had distracted the attention of many leaders away from the health crisis, he also highlighted examples of positive cross-community and cross-boundary coordination between Pristina and Belgrade across ethnic and political divides improving communication and coordination in dealing with the health crisis. Moreover, he stressed that the removal of the 100 per cent tariff on imports from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as of 1 April 2020, coupled with the introduction of reciprocity measures vis-à-vis Belgrade, marked a step towards resuming more regular commercial relations and a return towards the principles of the Central European Free Trade Agreement, which he viewed as an important signpost towards a restart of the political dialogue between the two capitals. Finally, the Special Representative welcomed the appointment by the European Union of a dedicated Special Representative charged with advancing the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. He added that a coordinated international approach in support of the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade would be essential and remained the best hope for reaching a comprehensive agreement and for sustaining peace.[521]

During the discussion that ensued, Council members welcomed the positive developments during the reporting period, including the joint efforts by Belgrade and Pristina to contain the COVID-19 outbreak,[522] as well as the lifting of tariffs on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.[523] Council members also welcomed the appointment of the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkans regional issues[524] and urged Belgrade and Pristina to resume dialogue with help from the European Union.[525]

With regard to the role of UNMIK, a number of Council members expressed their support for the work of the Mission.[526] More specifically, the representative of the Russian

[520] For further information on the mandate of UNMIK, see part X, sect. I.
[521] S /2020/339.
[522] Ibid, Belgium, France, Germany, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.
[523] Ibid., Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany and United Kingdom.
[524] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.
[525] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States); and Viet Nam.
[526] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic. France, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

Federation maintained that the Council should continue to support the Mission as it played a leading role for creating the conditions conducive to a negotiated solution. The representative of the United States reiterated that the Mission had fulfilled its original purpose and looked forward to working with other Council members to draw down UNMIK and determine a more relevant role for the United Nations in helping Kosovo and the Western Balkans realize their full potential. While expressing their recognition for the work of UNMIK, the representatives of Estonia and the United Kingdom also expressed their support for a strategic review of UNMIK.[527] A number of speakers commended the initiatives of UNMIK to promote the participation of women in the peace process.[528]

On 21 October 2020, in his second briefing to the Council, the Special Representative opened his remarks by providing an overview of the different phases Kosovo had moved through during the COVID-19 pandemic, from stringent measures and lockdowns to a more relaxed approach, prioritizing economic recovery. He highlighted the obstacles faced by the government in responding to the rapidly spreading pandemic, including the severe socio-economic consequences endured by the population, particularly affecting youth as well as women and vulnerable communities. On the peace process, the Special Representative underscored that the removal of the reciprocity measures on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had created an impetus for restarting the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. That development had been accompanied by the appointment of the European Union's new dedicated Special Representative and a high-level meeting hosted by the President of France and the Chancellor of Germany on 10 July 2020, which had led to the official resumption of the EU-facilitated dialogue. Similarly, the United States government had hosted a meeting at the White House in September 2020 during which agreements were signed by the parties in the economic and other spheres. Commending Belgrade and Pristina for resuming the negotiation process, the Special Representative called on both parties to maintain a constructive dialogue process despite challenges and differences of views. In the context of the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), the Special Representative stressed the importance of women's meaningful participation

[527] Ibid., Estonia and United Kingdom.
[528] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and United Kingdom.

in the peace process at all levels, ensuring the broader representation of different sectors of society. The Special Representative also stated that important steps had been taken to advance the investigative and judicial processes of the Kosovo Specialist Prosecutor's Office and the Kosovo Specialist Chambers concerning the filing of indictments against President Hashim Thaçi and the leader of the Democratic Party of Kosovo in June 2020. He added that the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office were integral parts of the Kosovo justice system, and urged the leaders to redouble their efforts to counter misinformation and to ensure that the Prosecution and Chambers' proceedings received unambiguous institutional and political support, essential for strengthening the rule of law and long-term stability in Kosovo.[529]

During the discussion following the briefing, Council members broadly welcomed the resumption of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina facilitated by the European Union, as well as the agreements on the normalization of economic relations signed under the auspices of the United States during 2020.[530] In that connection, a number of speakers expressed support for the efforts of the European Union's new dedicated Special Representative in advancing the political dialogue between the two capitals,[531] with a few regretting that he had not been invited to participate at the meeting.[532] The representative of the Russian Federation hoped that under the leadership of the new dedicated Special Representative, the European mediation would gain momentum and translate into progress towards resolving Kosovo's problems. With regard to the rule of law and accountability, several Council members called for cooperation with the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and with the Specialist Prosecutor's Office in the fight against impunity for perpetrators of serious crimes.[533] The representative of the United Kingdom regretted the continuing slow progress in domestic prosecutions for war crimes, and urged Kosovo and Serbian authorities to work together in dealing with those crimes. Echoing the Special

[529] See S/2020/1040.
[530] Ibid., Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
[531] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, South Africa, Tunisia and United Kingdom.
[532] Ibid., Belgium, France and Germany.
[533] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

Representative, many speakers called for the greater participation of women and youth in the peace process.[534]

Council members also commended the work of UNMIK on several fronts, from its role in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights to its efforts to confront the COVID-19 pandemic in Kosovo, with some stressing the need for a review of the Mission, including an option for a drawdown.[535] In that regard, the representative of the United States reiterated that while the United Nations could play an important role in furthering the development of democratic norms and institutions in the region, it did not require a Chapter VII-mandated mission to advance recognition, integration and normalization. She urged the Security Council members to begin taking the steps needed for a responsible drawdown to ensure a more relevant and effective role for the United Nations in helping Kosovo and the rest of the Western Balkans realize its full potential.

Videoconferences: Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998)**,** 1199 (1998)**,** 1203 (1998)**,** 1239 (1999) **and** 1244 (1999)

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
24 April 2020	S/2020/339	Letter dated 28 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
21 October 2020	S/2020/1040	Letter dated 23 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[534] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa.
[535] Ibid., United Kingdom and United States.

19. Items relating to Ukraine

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

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled "Letter dated 13 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2014/264)". The meeting took the form of a briefing.[536] More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is given in the table below.

On 18 February 2020, Council members held a meeting at the request of the Russian Federation. At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine.

The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs said at the outset that the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements, together with the Minsk protocol and the Minsk memorandum, remained the only agreed framework for a negotiated, peaceful settlement of the conflict in eastern Ukraine. In her briefing, she updated the Council on the progress in the implementation of the Minsk provisions since her last briefing in July 2019. She said that a number of important developments had since given rise to hope for long-elusive progress in the implementation of the Minsk provisions, including its key security and political aspects. She highlighted that on 9 December 2019, after a three-year hiatus, the leaders of France, Germany, Russia Federation and Ukraine had met in Paris under the so-called Normandy format. The Normandy Four meeting called for immediate measures to stabilize the situation in the conflict area, measures to implement the political provisions of the Minsk agreements and follow-up steps. The leaders committed to a full and comprehensive

[536] For more information on format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

implementation of the ceasefire, strengthened by the implementation of all the necessary ceasefire support measures, as well as to supporting the development and implementation of an updated demining plan and an agreement within the Trilateral Contact Group on three additional disengagement areas, with the aim of disengaging forces and equipment. The Under-Secretary-General also highlighted that she had used the opportunity of her first visit to Ukraine in December 2019 to reiterate the Secretary-General's support for the ongoing peace efforts and critical reforms in Ukraine, noting that her interlocutors were clear in their desire to see tangible progress in the negotiations with many stressing the need for greater involvement by women in the ongoing peace efforts. She also noted from her visit that the conflict continued to exact an unacceptable humanitarian toll on the Ukrainian population. It destabilized overall peace and security in Ukraine, but also potentially in the region as a whole. She added that the positive momentum and the stated commitment of the Normandy Four and the Trilateral Contact Group participants to address the conflict with renewed impetus and a sense of urgency needed encouragement and full support.[537]

The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office briefed the Council on the recent discussions and efforts by the Trilateral Contact Group to reach a sustainable solution to the conflict in eastern Ukraine. She provided updates on the exchange of detainees, opening of additional crossing points and disengagement of forces and hardware in pilot areas that had taken place during the reporting period. She also noted that on 1 October 2019, parties to the conflict had accepted the Steinmeier formula, which detailed the sequence of steps to be taken with regard to local elections in the non-Government-controlled territories and the entry into force of the special status for those territories. The Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine reported on the general security situation on the ground, noting that while there had been an overall decrease in the average number of ceasefire violations, isolated spikes in violence had continued to occur, including a major ceasefire violation in the Luhansk region that occurred on the same day as the Council meeting. He provided additional details on the

[537] See S/PV.8726.

implementation of the measures agreed upon by the Normandy Four during its December 2019 meeting.

During the discussion, Council members welcomed the December 2019 meeting of the quartet in the Normandy format and called on the parties for compliance with the Minsk agreements, as endorsed by the Council in resolution 2202 (2015). Speakers expressed differing views on the responsibilities for the implementation of the Minsk agreements. Some speakers accused the Russian Federation of violating the Minsk agreements.[538] More specifically, the representative of France called on the parties, in particular the separatist armed groups, to refrain from any provocation, in order to avoid any military escalation on the ground and for the Russian Federation to use its influence on the separatists for the full implementation of the Minsk agreements. The representative of the Russian Federation cautioned that every time Council members said that Russia was failing to comply with the Minsk agreements, they were deliberately misleading their own people and the international community. The representative of the Russian Federation recalled also that the Normandy format had been created specifically to support the implementation of the Minsk agreements and reiterated that the efforts made under that format would be effective only if they were rooted in unconditional implementation of the package of measures and agreements reached under the Normandy format. He added that its implementation by all parties, primarily Ukraine, would become a decisive factor for the Russian Federation in assessing the viability of a new meeting in the Normandy format.

While recognizing the progress achieved on various fronts, including prisoner exchanges, the establishment of new disengagement areas and the opening of new crossing points along the line of contact, several Council members also noted the continuing violations of the ceasefire, as indicated in the reports of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and called for the immediate cessation of hostilities in eastern Ukraine. In that connection, several delegations condemned the attacks which had been carried out on that same day near the Zolote disengagement area and had resulted in Ukrainian casualties.[539] Speakers also stressed the need for safe access to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission for ensuring effective monitoring and

[538] Ibid., United States, Germany, United Kingdom, Estonia and Belgium.
[539] Ibid., United States, Germany, Estonia and France.

verification of the Minsk agreements ceasefire regime,[540] and called for full and unconditional access to international human rights and humanitarian mechanisms to all areas of Ukraine.[541]

On the holding of local elections, the representative of the Dominican Republic believed it appropriate to convene a future Normandy format meeting in order to ensure that local elections were held in the best conditions and guarantee the continuity of the negotiations within the framework of the implementation of the peace agreements. The representative of the United Kingdom agreed with the Russian Federation that local elections would pave the way for special status to be granted in parts of the Donbas region. She noted, however, that the local elections could take place only in proper conditions, and those conditions included a comprehensive ceasefire, unfettered access for the Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine of the OSCE and the withdrawal of foreign troops.

Also participating in the meeting, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine said that his Government looked forward to holding local elections throughout the territory of Ukraine, including its temporarily occupied parts, once the security and political conditions allowed it in accordance with Ukrainian legislation and the Copenhagen document of the OSCE and under Ukraine's control of its internationally recognized borders.

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

[540] Ibid., Germany, United Kingdom, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Estonia, France, Belgium and Ukraine.
[541] Ibid., Germany, United Kingdom, Estonia, France, Belgium, and Ukraine.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8726 18 February 2020			Ukraine[a]	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Special Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Chairperson-in-Office, Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission	All Council members,[b] all invitees[c]	

[a] Ukraine was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.
[b] The representatives of Germany and the Russian Federation took the floor more than once in order to make further statements.
[c] The Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office and the Chief Monitor of the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission participated in the meeting via video-teleconference from Kyiv. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ukraine took the floor more than once in order to make a further statement.

Middle East

20. The situation in the Middle East

During the period under review, the Security Council held 17 meetings in relation to the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East". Consistent with prior practice, most meetings held under this item took the form of briefings.[542] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the tables below. In addition, the Council held a total of 31 open videoconferences in connection with this item.[543] More information on videoconferences is given in the tables below. Under this item, both at meetings and videoconferences, Council members considered a variety of topics, principally, the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic; the conflict in Yemen; the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF); and the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In 2020, the Council also held three closed videoconferences with countries contributing troops and police to the UNDOF and UNIFIL.[544] In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, Council members held informal consultations of the whole and an informal interactive dialogue to discuss this item.[545]

In 2020, the Council adopted a total of eight resolutions in connection with this item. The Council extended twice the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), on 13 January 2020 for six months until 15 July 2020,[546] and on 14 July 2020 for one year until 15 July 2021.[547] On 25 February 2020, the Council renewed the sanctions measures in relation to the situation in Yemen until 26 February 2021 and extended the mandate

[542] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[543] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[544] In connection with 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", Council members held a closed videoconference on 15 June and 8 December 2020 in relation to UNDOF and on 10 August 2020 in relation to UNIFIL; see A/75/2, part II, chap. 22. See also S/2020/789 and S/2020/1045.
[545] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 2.B. See also S/2020/258; S/2020/1142; S/2020/344; S/2020/1102 and S/2021/9.
[546] Resolution 2505 (2020), para. 1.
[547] Resolution 2534 (2020), para. 1.

of the Panel of Experts for 13 months until 28 March 2021.[548] The Council also renewed twice the mandate of UNDOF for periods of six months each,[549] and extended the mandate of UNIFIL once for a period of 12 months, also authorizing a reduction in the maximum number of authorized troops from 15,000 to 13,000.[550] The Council failed to adopt four draft resolutions in relation to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.[551] As elaborated below, two draft resolutions were not adopted due to the negative vote of one or more permanent members, and the remaining two were not adopted due to the failure to obtain the required number of votes.

During the period under review, the meetings and videoconferences in relation to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to focus on three main aspects: the political process to end the conflict; the humanitarian situation in the country; and the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. Following the practice in 2019, briefings concerning the political process and the humanitarian situation in Syria were sometimes addressed jointly during the same meeting or videoconference whereas the proliferation and use of chemical weapons was addressed separately in dedicated meetings and open videoconferences.[552]

Regarding the political process, Council members heard regular monthly briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, the Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, and the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on the efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict and the implementation of resolution 2254 (2015). In this connection, in 2020, the briefings and discussions focused on the progress of the Constitutional Committee, the Special Envoy's continued engagement with key international stakeholders, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the socioeconomic and political situations in Syria.[553] In February 2020, against the backdrop of the military hostilities in north-west Syria and the escalation of violence in Idlib, the Special Envoy reported that despite the ceasefire, heavy clashes and mutual shelling continued between Turkish forces and Syrian

[548] Resolution 2511 (2020), paras. 2 and 7.
[549] Resolutions 2530 (2020), para. 15; and 2555 (2020), para. 15.
[550] Resolution 2539 (2020), paras. 1 and 29.
[551] See S/2020/654, S/2020/658, S/2020/667 and S/2020/683.
[552] For more information on the format of meetings in relation to this item, see *Repertoire*, *Supplement 2019* and *Supplement 2018*, part II, sect. I.
[553] See S/PV.8475, S/PV.8520, S/PV.8609, and S/PV.8493.

Government forces inside Syria. Reiterating the Secretary-General's strong appeal for a cessation of hostilities, he called for an end to the hostilities and on everyone to engage in a serious international effort to cooperate on Idlib and called on all major players and the members of the Council to put their full weight behind that logic.[554] At the 8738th meeting held on 28 February 2020, the Secretary-General expressed deep concerns about the changing nature of the conflict in Idlib and reiterated the need for a ceasefire.[555] Furthermore, following the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria said that different ceasefire arrangements broadly continued to hold across Syria.[556] He also reported on the progress of his engagements with the co-Chairs of the Constitutional Committee and the Syria Women's Advisory Board, as well as on the issue of detainees, abductees and missing persons, appealing to the Syrian Government and all other Syrian parties to unilaterally release detainees and abductees.[557] During his briefings, the Special Envoy informed the Council about the progress of the Constitutional Committee and its agenda, with a focus on preparing and drafting a constitutional reform and gradually developing a wider political process to implement resolution 2254 (2015). Two civil society representatives briefed Council members at two separate videoconferences on the topic of detainees and missing persons, particularly women and children.[558]

In relation to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, Council members heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator as well as by the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the findings of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of relevant resolutions, including resolution 2165 (2014) which authorized cross-border humanitarian operations.[559] The briefers provided regular

[554] See S/PV.8715.
[555] See S/PV.8738,. Further to the meetings, the representatives of the Russian Federation and Turkey transmitted the Additional Protocol to the Memorandum on the Stabilization of the Situation in the Idlib De-Escalation Area between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey, signed on 5 March 2020, deciding to cease all military actions in the Idlib De-Escalation Area (S/2020/187).
[556] See S/2020/353.
[557] See S/2020/353; S/2020/420; S/2020/551, ; S/2020/823; S/2020/936; and S/2020/1049.
[558] Ms. Noura Ghazi, human rights lawyer and activist briefed on 16 June 2020 (S/2020/551) and Ms. Wafa Mustafa, representative of Families for Freedom on 23 July 2020 (S/2020/743).
[559] Resolution 2165 (2014), para. 2.

updates on the humanitarian conditions in different parts of the country, particularly Idlib in northwestern Syria and the Rukban and Al-Hol refugee camps, and on the efforts of the cross-border humanitarian assistance, as well as the COVID-19 preparedness and response measures across Syria. In connection with the humanitarian situation in Syria, Council members were also briefed once by the Executive Director of UNICEF,[560] and by two civil society representatives in two separate videoconferences.[561]

With respect to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, Council members were regularly briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her Deputy on the progress in the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013) on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons program. Starting in September 2020, the Council was briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in open videoconferences and public meetings[562] while prior in the year these briefings took place in informal consultations of the whole, closed videoconferences as well as an informal interactive dialogue in May 2020.[563] In her briefings, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs reported on the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, including on the investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Aleppo in 2018, and in Saraqib in 2016, as well as on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of OPCW. At its 8764th meeting, held on 5 October 2020, prior to the briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Council members disagreed on whether to invite the former Director-General of OPCW, Mr. José Bustani, in accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure. Further to these exchanges, the Council held a procedural vote, resulting in the rejection of the proposal to invite Mr. Bustani.[564] In the monthly briefing for December 2020, Council members heard the briefing from the Director-General of OPCW, who reported on the progress of the Syrian chemical weapons

[560] See S/PV.8734.
[561] The Director of Policy and Senior Adviser at Physicians for Human Rights briefed on 29 June 2020 (S/2020/635) and the Regional Director of Syria Relief and Development briefed on 29 July 2020 (S/2020/758).
[562] See S/2020/902, S/PV.8764, S/2020/1088, and S/2020/1202.
[563] See S/2020/258, S/2020/1142, S/2020/344, S/2020/558. S/2020/1102, S/2020/789, S/2021/9, and S/2020/1045. For the practice in 2019, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2019*, part I, sect. 22.
[564] See S/PV.8764. The result of the vote on the procedural motion on the question of whether the Council agreed to invite Mr. José Bustani to brief was as follows: *in favour*: China, Russian Federation, South Africa; *against:* Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States; and *abstaining*: Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Viet Nam. For more details, see part II, sect. VIII.

dossier following the issuance of the first Investigation and Identification Team report in April 2020.[565]

In 2020, the Council continued to focus in its meetings on three distinct areas in relation to the conflict in Yemen, namely, the political process to find a solution to the conflict, the humanitarian situation in the country, and the sanctions measures in place against individuals and entities designated as engaging in or providing support for acts that threatened the peace, security and stability in Yemen.

Regarding the political process, the Council heard regular briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen on the progress in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. During his briefings, both in meetings and videoconferences, he updated the Council on the status of the Hodeidah Agreement, including the outcomes of consultations between the parties. He also addressed the evolution of the hostilities in the country as well as the United Nations-brokered negotiations between the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah to reach agreement on a joint declaration that would include a nationwide ceasefire, economic and humanitarian measures and the resumption of the political process aimed at comprehensively resolving and ending the conflict. The Special Representative made reference to gender inclusion as a high priority in the context of the joint declaration.[566] In his briefings, the Special Envoy also reported on the progress made in prisoner and detainee exchanges, and the operation of medical air bridge facilitated by the World Health Organization to transport patients from Sana'a for medical assistance abroad. The Special Envoy continued to sound the alarm on the lack of progress in addressing the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which was threatening to cause an environmental and economic catastrophe for Yemen and the neighbouring countries and emphasized that the threat had to be dealt with on a purely technical basis, without politicization.[567] On 15 October 2020, the Special Envoy reported that over 1,000 prisoners were being released as agreed upon during the September 2020 talks in Switzerland, which was the largest such operation in the history of the conflict in Yemen.[568]

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[565] See S/2020/1202.
[566] See S.PV.8753.
[567] See S/PV.8725, S/PV.8753 and S/PV.8757.
[568] See S/PV.8770.

Regarding the humanitarian situation in Yemen, the Council heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, his Deputy and the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, often in conjunction with the Special Envoy. The briefers reported on the dire humanitarian situation in the country, exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued economic instability. The briefers also focused on public health concerns, the displacement resulting from the escalation of the conflict in various parts of the country and the disproportionate impact of the war on children and women.[569] In this regard, the Council also heard briefings from the General Coordinator in Yemen of Médecins du Monde and Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation, who focused on the grave human rights violations against children in Yemen, including their widespread recruitment and maiming.[570] On 15 July 2020, the Council also heard a briefing by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the serious implications of the oil leakage of the *FSO SAFER*. She reported that UNEP had been working to develop a response plan with the International Maritime Organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and PERSGA (Mutual Aid Centre of the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden). She said that it was imperative that access be granted to the *FSO SAFER* to assess and inspect the current state of the vessel to safely evacuate the oil and prevent environmental and human catastrophe.[571] Against a backdrop of growing concerns over the risk of widespread famine in Yemen, on 11 November 2020, the Council also heard briefings from the Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Founder and Executive Director of Solutions for Sustainable Society. During the briefing, the Executive Director of WFP called on the major donors to step

[569] See S/PV.8704; S/PV.8725; S/PV.8745; S/PV.8753; S/PV.8757; S/PV.8770; S/2020/313; S/2020/411; S/2020/721; and S/2020/1109.
[570] See S/PV.8753.
[571] See S/2020/721.

up with additional funds and urged the Council to seize the opportunity to avoid the looming famine in Yemen.[572]

Regarding the sanctions in Yemen, on 18 February 2020, the Council held a meeting at which the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in her capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), briefed the Council on the body's activities since 16 May 2019.[573] She reported that the Committee had received two implementation reports, from Panama and Portugal, and continued to receive vessel inspection reports from the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen. She also noted that the Committee had agreed to call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to strictly adhere to international humanitarian law and to investigate and prosecute members who had committed international humanitarian law violations, pursuant to the recommendation contained in the final report of the Panel of Experts under resolution 2456 (2019).[574]

In its decisions in 2020, the Council also addressed the issues outlined above concerning the conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen as well as the mandates of UNDOF and UNIFIL.

In connection with the Syrian Arab Republic and against the backdrop of the expiration of the authorization for the cross-border operations mechanism which had been last renewed in December 2018 by resolution 2449 (2018), [575] the Council held a meeting on 10 January 2020, to consider two competing draft resolutions to extend the mechanism. The two drafts were submitted by Belgium and Germany,[576] and by the Russian Federation,[577] respectively.[578] At the outset of the meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation proposed an oral amendment to paragraph 6 of the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany.[579] Taking the floor before the vote on the oral amendment, the representative of Belgium stated that the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation was not acceptable because it contradicted the very system

[572] See S/2020/1109.
[573] See S/PV.8725.
[574] S/2020/326. See also S/2020/70 and S/2020/70/Corr.1
[575] Resolution 2449 (2018), para. 3.
[576] S/2020/24.
[577] Since the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation was withdrawn there is no record available.
[578] See S/PV.8700.
[579] Ibid.

of the cross-border mechanism that needed to be preserved and asked the Council to approve the draft resolution as presented by the co-penholders and to vote in favour of it. The oral amendment failed to garner the sufficient number of votes and the Council subsequently voted and adopted the draft resolution as originally proposed, as resolution 2504 (2020).[580] By resolution 2504 (2020), the Council extended the authorization of humanitarian agencies to use two out of the four border crossings authorized in resolution 2165 (2014) to deliver humanitarian assistance for a period of six months, until 10 July 2020, excluding the border crossings of Al-Ramtha and of Al Yarubiyah.[581] The representative of China, noting his active engagement in the negotiations process, said that given the current situation, extending the mandate for two crossing points for six months was realistic and feasible as they were the most important and served the humanitarian needs of Syria.[582] The representative of the Russian Federation explained that it abstained for the sole purpose of not blocking cross-border assistance to the Syrian province of Idlib, which was the only one that still really needed that method of delivering supplies. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that the Council should be prepared to take action, including restoring cross-border access in the north-east, if the Secretary-General's review concluded that alternative humanitarian access routes were inadequate to meet the humanitarian need of the population. The representative of the United States explained its abstention by saying that the text of resolution 2504 (2020) was the only path forward that would reasonably allow for the delivery of any aid at all to the Syrian people. She also emphasized that the resolution was "watered down" and inadequate to the needs of the Syrian people due to the unwillingness of the Russian Federation to maintain the then current levels of aid flows. At the end of the meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation announced that in light of the adoption of resolution 2504 (2020), the Russian Federation would withdraw the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/24.

[580] The result on the vote on the oral amendment to the draft resolution (S/2020/24) was as follows: *in favour*: China, Russian Federation, Viet Nam; *against*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States; *abstaining*: Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia.
[581] Resolution 2504 (2020), para. 3.
[582] S/PV.8700.

With the expiration of the authorization for the cross-border operations mechanism again in July 2020, the Council voted on five competing draft resolutions between 7 July 2020 and 11 July 2020. In the first round of consideration of the competing drafts,[583] the Council failed first to adopt a draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany, due to the negative vote of two permanent members, the Russian Federation and China.[584] In addition, the Council also failed to adopt a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation because it did not receive the required number of votes.[585] On 10 July 2020, in two separate votes following the written procedure, the Council failed again to adopt any of the two draft resolutions presented. The draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany was not adopted due to the negative vote of two permanent members, the Russian Federation and China.[586] The draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation was also not adopted owing to an insufficient number of votes.[587] On 11 July 2020, further to a vote on three possible amendments, two submitted by the Russian Federation and one by China,[588] the Council voted on a fifth draft resolution, submitted by Belgium and Germany,[589] which was adopted as resolution 2533 (2020).[590] By resolution 2533 (2020) the Council decided to renew the cross-border humanitarian mechanism established in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolutions 2165 (2014), for a period of 12 months, until 10 July 2021, excluding the border crossings of Al-Ramtha, Al Yarubiyah and Bab al-Salam, three of the four border crossings authorized in resolution 2165 (2014).[591] In the explanation of vote submitted to

[583] The vote followed the procedure provided for in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/253). For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[584] See S/2020/654. See also S/2020/657 and S/2020/661.
[585] See S/2020/658. See also S/2020/664 and S/2020/671.
[586] See S/2020/667. See also S/2020/681 and S/2020/693.
[587] See S/2020/683. See also S/2020/688 and S/2020/694.
[588] The three amendments were submitted by the Russian Federation (S/2020/690 and S/2020/691) and China (S/2020/692), respectively. Having failed to obtain the required number of votes, these amendments were not adopted, see S/2020/695, S/2020/696, and S/2020/697.
[589] S/2020/684.
[590] The result on the vote on the draft resolution (S/2020/684) was as follows: *in favour:* Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; *against:* none; *abstaining*: China, Dominican Republic and Russian Federation). See S/2020/698.
[591] Resolution 2533 (2020), para. 2.

the Council,[592] the representative of Belgium submitted that, after many rounds of discussion and votes and given the divergent positions among the members of the Council, the Security Council had no choice but to make yet another decision that did not reflect the humanitarian needs on the ground, in order to find compromise. He added that in the interest of the almost three million civilians who depended on the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing, the Council had to make the decision to compromise, allowing for Bab Al-Hawa to stay open for 12 months, which would allow for better planning and greater predictability for the many non-governmental organizations that guaranteed the survival of the people suffering in and around Idlib.[593] Addressing his country's abstention, the representative of China said that the cross-border mechanism should be adjusted in the light of the developments on the ground, and noted that resolution 2533 (2020), presented by Belgium and Germany, reaffirmed the commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and included further adjustment to the cross-border mechanism.[594] Explaining his country's abstention, the representative of the Dominican Republic stated that although the Council had renewed the mechanism, the failure to reopen the border crossing of Al-Yarubiyah and the decision to close the Bab Al-Salam crossing would have terrible consequences and that the flagrant politicization of the decision was not one of which the Council should be proud. He expressed hope that the Council would be able to overcome the many differences, divisions and fears that prevented it from taking principled, people-centred humanitarian decisions.[595] The representative of the Russian Federation, explaining his abstention, stated that the vote reflected Russia's principled position on the cross-border mechanism, and that the cross-border mechanism in Syria did not reflect the minimal requirements of international humanitarian law as it was impossible to monitor how humanitarian assistance was delivered, and who were its final beneficiaries on the ground. He added that the co-penholders of the resolution had ignored his country's principled concerns which forced his country to block the German-Belgium draft resolution twice and present

[592] For more information on procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[593] See S/2020/702.
[594] Ibid.
[595] Ibid.

alternative texts, and reminded the authors of the resolution, as well as the penholders of other dossiers in the Council, that the "so-called penholdership" was not a privilege but rather a special responsibility vis-a-vis other members of the Council, as well as the whole international community.[596]

With regard to the conflict in Yemen, the Council adopted resolutions 2505 (2020) of 13 January 2020 and 2534 (2020) of 14 July 2020 concerning the United Nations Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). The Council extended the mandate of the Mission twice, for a period of six months by resolution 2505 (2020) until 15 July 2020,[597] and one year by resolution 2534 (2020) until 15 July 2021.[598] By both resolutions, the Council reiterated the existing mandate of the Mission, which included leading and supporting the functioning of the Redeployment Coordination Committee to oversee the governorate-wide ceasefire, redeployment of forces, and mine action operations; monitoring the compliance of the parties to the ceasefire and the mutual redeployment of forces from the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa; working with the parties so that the security of the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa was assured by local security forces in accordance with Yemeni law; and facilitating and coordinating United Nations support to assist the parties to fully implement the Hodeidah Agreement.[599] Taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council also requested the Secretary-General to fully deploy UNMHA expeditiously, and called on the parties to the Hodeidah Agreement to support the United Nations by ensuring the safety, security, and health of UNMHA personnel, and the unhindered and expeditious movement into and within Yemen of UNMHA personnel and equipment, provisions and essential supplies.[600] In addition, by both resolution 2505 (2020) and resolution 2534 (2020), the Council reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to report on a monthly basis on progress regarding the implementation of the resolutions, and further requested the

[596] Ibid.
[597] Resolution 2505 (2020), para. 1.
[598] Resolution 2534 (2020), para. 1.
[599] Resolution 2505 (2020) and resolution 2534 (2020), para. 2(a)-(d). For more information on the mandate of UNMHA, see part X, sect. II.
[600] Resolution 2534 (2020), para. 5.

Secretary-General to present to the Council a further review of UNMHA at least one month before the expiration of the Mission's mandate.[601]

Regarding the sanctions measures imposed in connection with the conflict in Yemen, on 25 February 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2511 (2020) under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the abstention of China and the Russian Federation. By resolution 2511 (2020), the Council renewed the sanctions measures in place until 26 February 2021, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts for 13 months, until 28 March 2021.[602] Explaining his abstention, the representative of the Russian Federation said that he was not in a position to support resolution 2511 (2020), penned by the United Kingdom, as not all of the concerns expressed during the consultations were taken into account. Emphasizing that there was no unity during the discussions of the report of the Panel of Experts, the representative of the Russian Federation noted that many delegations did not have an opportunity to participate on equal footing in efforts to achieve a balanced text and what transpired during the voting attested to the non-constructive working methods of the sponsors of the draft.[603] The representative of China explained his decision to abstain in the voting, stating that the resolution failed to address his country's concerns, including the broad mandates of the Panel of Experts and the unnecessary amendments to the designation criteria. He added that the recruitment of child soldiers and sexual violence in conflict were already included in the existing resolution under the criteria of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and the separate listing of these two acts had not been fully discussed by the Committee and was not in accordance with its practice.[604]

In 2020, the mandate of UNDOF was renewed twice by resolutions 2530 (2020) and 2555 (2020) for periods of six months each, until 31 December 2020 and 30 June 2021, respectively.[605] By resolution 2530 (2020), the Council requested UNDOF to take all appropriate

[601] Resolution 2505 (2020) and resolution 2534 (2020), paras 7 and 8.
[602] Resolution 2511 (2020), paras. 2 and 7. For more information on the sanctions measures, see part VII, sect. III and for more information on the Committee and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.
[603] See S/PV.8732.
[604] Ibid.
[605] Resolutions 2530 (2020), para.15; and 2555 (2020), para 15. For more information on the mandate of UNDOF, see part X, sect. I.

steps to protect the safety, security and health of all UNDOF personnel, in line with resolution 2518 (2020), taking into account the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.[606] By resolution 2555 (2020), the Council requested the Secretary-General and troop- and police-contributing countries to seek to increase the number of women in UNDOF, as well as to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women at all levels, and in all positions, including senior leadership positions, and to implement other relevant provisions of resolution 2538 (2020).[607]

In connection with Lebanon, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2539 (2020), extending the mandate of UNIFIL for one year until 31 August 2021.[608] Against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Council commended UNIFIL for the preventive measures taken to fight the pandemic, and recalled resolution 2532 (2020) and its request to the Secretary-General to instruct peacekeeping operations to provide support to host country authorities in their efforts to contain the pandemic and take all appropriate steps to protect the safety, security and health of all UN personnel in UN peace operations.[609] Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Beirut explosions on 4 August 2020, the Council expressed its solidarity with Lebanon and its people, and welcomed the International Conference on Assistance and Support to Lebanon and Beirut organized on 9 August 2020 by France and the United Nations, further calling on the international community to reinforce its support.[610] Recognizing that UNIFIL had successfully implemented its mandate since 2006 and allowed for maintaining peace and security, the Council decided to authorize the reduction of the troop-ceiling set out in paragraph 11 of resolution 1701 (2006) from 15,000 to 13,000 authorized troops.[611]

For the purposes of facilitating the coverage of this item, information on meetings and videoconferences is set out below under six separate tables and under four separate headings,

[606] Resolution 2530 (2020), para. 8.
[607] Resolution 2555 (2020), para. 13.
[608] Resolution 2539 (2020), para. 1. See also part I, sect. 22. For more information on the mandate of UNIFIL, see part X, sect. I.
[609] Resolution 2539 (2020), fifth preambular paragraph. See also resolution 2532 (2020).
[610] Ibid., second preambular paragraph. See also S/2020/1045.
[611] Resolution 2539 (2020), para. 29.

namely: (a) Syrian Arab Republic, (b) Yemen, (c) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, and (d) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Table 1

Meetings: The situation in the Middle East – Syrian Arab Republic

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8700 10 January 2020		Draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany S/2020/24	Syrian Arab Republic		13 Council members[a], invitee	Resolution 2504 (2020) 11-0-4[b]
S/PV.8707 29 January 2020			Syrian Arab Republic	Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	14 Council members[c], all invitees	
S/PV.8708 29 January 2020			Syrian Arab Republic	Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8715 6 February 2020			Iran (Islamic Republic of), , Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	14 Council members[d], all invitees[e]	
S/PV.8727 19 February 2020			Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees[f]	

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8734 27 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the review of alternative modalities for the border crossing of Ya'rubiyah (S/2020/139) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401(2018), 2449 (2018) and 2504 (2020) (S/2020/141)		Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund	All Council members[g], all invitees	
S/PV.8738 28 February 2020			Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs	Secretary-General, 14 Council members[h], all invitees	

[a] The representatives of Niger and South Africa did not make a statement.
[b] *For:* Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam; *against:* none; *abstaining:* China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.
[c] The representative of Germany did not make a statement. The representative of Belgium spoke on behalf of the co-penholders on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic: Belgium and Germany.
[d] The representative of Niger did not make a statement.
[e] The Special Envoy and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.
[f] The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.
[g] Belgium was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Development and Germany was represented by its Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs.
[h] The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines did not make a statement.

Table 2

Videoconferences: The situation in the Middle East – Syrian Arab Republic

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 March 2020[a]	S/2020/254	Letter dated 31 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 April 2020	S/2020/353	Letter dated 1 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 April 2020	S/2020/354	Letter dated 1 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
18 May 2020	S/2020/420	Letter dated 20 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
19 May 2020	S/2020/427	Letter dated 21 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 June 2020	S/2020/551	Letter dated 18 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 June 2020	S/2020/635	Letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
7 July 2020	S/2020/657	Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	13-2-0[b] S/2020/661 (Record of written procedure)

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
8 July 2020	S/2020/664	Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	4-7-4[c] S/2020/671 (Record of written procedure)
10 July 2020	S/2020/681	Letter dated 10 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	13-2-0[d] S/2020/693 (Record of written procedure)
10 July 2020	S/2020/688	Letter dated 10 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	4-7-4[e] S/2020/694 (Record of written procedure)
11 July 2020	S/2020/702	Letter dated 12 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2533 (2020) 13-0-2[f] S/2020/698 (Record of written procedure)
23 July 2020	S/2020/743	Letter dated 27 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 July 2020	S/2020/758	Letter dated 4 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
19 August 2020	S/2020/823	Letter dated 21 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
27 August 2020	S/2020/866	Letter dated 31 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
10 September 2020	S/2020/902	Letter dated 14 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 September 2020	S/2020/915	Letter dated 18 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
18 September 2020	S/2020/936	Letter dated 22 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
27 October 2020	S/2020/1049	Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
5 November 2020	S/2020/1088	Letter dated 9 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
25 November 2020	S/2020/1147	Letter dated 27 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 December 2020	S/2020/1202	Letter dated 16 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 December 2020	S/2020/1257	Letter dated 23 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[a] Due to technical difficulties, instead of open, the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[b] *For*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *against*: China and Russian Federation. *abstaining*: None.

[c] *For*: China, Russian Federation, South Africa and Viet Nam. A*gainst*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. *abstaining*: Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.
[d] *For*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *against*: China and Russian Federation. *abstaining*: None.
[e] *For*: China, Russian Federation, South Africa and Viet Nam. *against*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. a*bstaining*: Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.
[f] *For*: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *against*: None. *abstaining*: China, Dominican Republic and Russian Federation.

Table 3

Meetings: The situation in the Middle East – Yemen

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8701 13 January 2020	Letter dated 14 October 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/823)	Draft resolution submitted by United Kingdom (S/2020/27)				Resolution 2505 (2020) 15-0-0
S/PV.8704 16 January 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Director of the Coordination Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	All Council members, all invitees[a]	
S/PV.8725 18 February 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members,[b] all invitees[c]	
S/PV.8732 25 February 2020	Letter dated 27 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/70)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/146)	Yemen		Eight Council members[d], invitee	Resolution 2511 (2020) 15-0-2[e] (adopted under Chapter VII)
S/PV.8745 12 March 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees[f]	

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8747 14 July 2020	Letter dated 15 June 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/524)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/679)				Resolution 2534 (2020) 15-0-0
S.PV.8753 28 July 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, General Coordinator in Yemen of Médecins du Monde, Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation	All Council members, all invitees[g]	
S/PV.8757 15 September 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8770 15 October 2020				Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees	

[a] The Director of the Coordination Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.
[b] The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines spoke in his national capacity and in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014).
[c] The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.
[d] Belgium, China, France, Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.
[e] *For:* Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam; *against:* none; *abstaining:* China, Russian Federation.
[f] The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Amman.
[g] The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva and the Under-Secretary-General participated in the meeting via videoconference from New York. The General Coordinator in Yemen of Médecins du Monde and the Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation participated in the meeting via videoconference from Sana'a.

Table 4

Videoconferences: The situation in the Middle East – Yemen

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
16 April 2020	S/2020/313	Letter dated 21 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
14 May 2020	S/2020/411	Letter dated 18 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
15 July 2020	S/2020/721	Letter dated 17 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 November 2020	S/2020/1109	Letter dated 13 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Table 5

Videoconferences: The situation in the Middle East – United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
29 June 2020	S/2020/612	Letter dated 29 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2530 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/624 (Record of written procedure)
18 December 2020	S/2020/1252	Letter dated 18 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2555 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/1263 (Record of written procedure)

Table 6

Videoconferences: The situation in the Middle East – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
28 August 2020	S/2020/853	Letter dated 29 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2539 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/857 (Record of written procedure)

21. The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

During the period under review, the Security Council held four meetings in connection with the item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question". No decisions were adopted during the period under review. In 2020, during the meetings under this item, the Council continued its practice of holding monthly briefings and quarterly open debates.[612] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held a total of nine open videoconferences in connection with this item.[613] More information on the open videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole.[614] Under this item, whether in the context of meetings or videoconferences, Council members also considered developments in Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the Middle East region, including the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) and the agreements between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.[615]

During the year 2020, in most meetings and videoconferences, Council members heard briefings by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General. Council members also heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs once,[616] and remarks by the Secretary-General twice in February and June 2020.[617] The Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States also briefed the Council once in January 2020.[618] In addition, in a videoconference held on 21 July 2020, Council

[612] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.
[613] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[614] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 2. See also S/2020/1142.
[615] See also part I, sect. 20.
[616] See S/PV.8706.
[617] See S/PV.8717 and S/2020/596.
[618] See S/PV.8706.

members heard briefings by Mr. Khalil Shikaki, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, and Mr. Daniel Levy, President of the US/Middle East Project.[619]

On 11 February 2020, in an extraordinary meeting further to the release by the United States of its "Peace to Prosperity" vision for Israelis and Palestinians, the Secretary-General affirmed the full commitment of the United Nations to a just and comprehensive peace between Palestinians and Israelis.[620] At that meeting, the Special Coordinator briefed the Council and reported that in the days since the United States' proposal was unveiled, sporadic violent incidents in the Palestinian territory were witnessed, including in East Jerusalem. He also mentioned that the United States had announced that it would establish a joint committee with Israel to produce a more detailed version of the conceptual maps included in the proposal, which would allow it to recognize an Israeli decision to apply its laws in specified areas in the West Bank. The Special Coordinator cautioned that the possible annexation of territory in the West Bank would have a devastating impact on the prospects for a two-State solution and would severely undermine opportunities for normalization and regional peace.[621]

During the review period, the Special Coordinator provided regular briefings to the Council in the context of monthly briefings in February, May, August and November, whether in person or via videoconference. In those instances, the Special Coordinator reported to Council members on the political situation including the process of intra-Palestinian reconciliation, coordination between the two parties, the violence in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, and on the status of the negotiations including the meetings of the Middle East Quartet. The Special Coordinator also reported on the deteriorating security and humanitarian conditions in Gaza, further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, and on the threat of annexation by Israel of areas of the West Bank. He urged Member States to provide additional resources for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), which faced a historical funding shortage. In his monthly briefings, the Special

[619] See S/2020/736.
[620] See S/PV.8717.
[621] Ibid.

Coordinator also covered developments in Lebanon and the Golan. During discussions, Council members condemned the continued occupation of the Palestinian territory and called for the resumption of negotiations based on a two-State solution. While cooperation between Israelis and Palestinians in fighting COVID-19 was welcomed, several Council members called for this effort as well as the international community's support for Palestine to be intensified.[622] On 25 August 2020, the Special Coordinator reported on the agreement reached between Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) stopping Israeli annexation plans over parts of the occupied West Bank and including the normalization of relations between the two countries. He said that the agreement had the potential to change dynamics across the region and created new opportunities for cooperation. The Special Coordinator also focused on the situation in Lebanon, and in particular on the 4 August 2020 explosion in the port of Beirut which left over 180 people dead, with 30 persons still missing and several thousand injured, as well as on the situation in the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) area of operation and in the Golan Heights.[623] At that videoconference, most Council members welcomed the agreement between Israel and the United Arab Emirates to normalize relationships, which also included the suspension of Israel's plan to annex part of the West Bank.[624] Some Council members called on Israel to abandon the annexation plan indefinitely,[625] and others urged the Palestinian Authority and Israel to take the opportunity provided by the suspension of the annexation plan to resume peace negotiations.[626] Council members also addressed the response of the Security Council to the 20 August 2020 notification by the United States concerning paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015) concerning the lifting of the arms embargo on the Islamic Republic of Iran. Most Council members agreed that the notification by the United States to invoke the "snapback mechanism" provided for in the resolution was ineffective, given that the United States had ceased to

[622] See S/2020/430, China, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russia and Viet Nam; and S/2020/596. Belgium, China Estonia, France, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.
[623] See S/2020/837.
[624] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom and United States.
[625] Ibid., Belgium, France, Germany, Indonesia and Russian Federation.
[626] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, France and United Kingdom.

participate in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).[627] The representative of Indonesia, who was the President of the Council for the month, responded to the question from the representatives of various Council members concerning the position of the Presidency on the letter of the United States.[628] He said that after having consulted with members and receiving letters from many Member States, it was clear that one member had a particular position on the issue, while a significant number of members had differing views. He added that, in his view, there was no consensus in the Council and the President was therefore not in a position to take further action.[629] At a videoconference held on 18 November 2020, the Special Coordinator reported on the signing of bilateral agreements between Bahrain and Israel, and urged the Middle East Quartet, Arab partners and Israeli and Palestinian leaders to use the progress to resume peace negotiations. Council members also welcomed normalisation agreements between Israel and several Arab states, and urged that the agreements be used as a springboard for the resumption of peace negotiations.

Every three months, monthly briefings, whether in the form of meetings or videoconferences, were also used to report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). During those briefings that took place in March, June, September and December, the Special Coordinator continued to report on the lack of progress in the implementation of the main provisions of the resolution, namely, with regard to the Israeli settlement activities, the violence against civilians including acts of terror, incitement, provocation and inflammatory rhetoric, the steps and efforts to advance the peace process as well as the actions by all States to distinguish in their relevant dealings between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. At a videoconference held on 30 March,[630] the Special Coordinator praised the far-reaching measures that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority had taken to contain the spread of the COVID-19 virus. He noted that the coordination put in place and the joint commitment to tackle the threat to both populations was exemplary. At these meetings most Council members

[627] Ibid., Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Russia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom. For further details on the discussion, see part V, sect. II.B.
[628] Ibid., Russia, China and South Africa.
[629] Ibid. For further details on the role of the presidency, see part II, sect. IV.
[630] S/2020/263.

expressed concern at the lack of progress with respect to the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), and reaffirmed their commitment to a two-State solution. Council members viewed the COVID-19 coordination among Israelis and Palestinians as an opportunity for relaunching peace negotiations. Some Council members reminded Israel of its obligations as the occupying power under international law to protect the lives and safety of the Palestinian population, including by providing them with vaccines for COVID-19.[631] Other Council members expressed concern at the violence against children, and emphasised the need for accountability through thorough and transparent investigations.[632] In 2020, as it happened in 2019, the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) were submitted in writing twice, the fourteenth report in June and the sixteenth report in December.[633] During a videoconference held on 24 June 2020 with six Council members participating at the ministerial level, the Secretary-General delivered his remarks. The Secretary-General expressed concern over the continuing threat of annexation by Israel of parts of the occupied Palestinian territory. The Secretary-General affirmed that if implemented, annexation would constitute a most serious violation of international law, grievously harm the prospect of a two-State solution and undercut the possibilities of a renewal of negotiations. He also called on the Government of Israel to abandon its annexation plans and encouraged regional and international supporters of the two-State solution to help bring the parties back to a path towards a negotiated, peaceful settlement. He called on the Middle East Quartet to take up its mandated mediation role and find a mutually agreeable framework for the parties to re-engage with it and other key States, without preconditions.[634] The Special Coordinator also focused on the threat posed by annexation to a future viable Palestinian state, and provided a briefing on the fourteenth report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016). He highlighted the widespread opposition to the annexation plan among the international and regional communities, as well as among civil society in both Israel and Palestine. He also shared his concerns over the impact of the recent decision by the Palestinian Authority to stop accepting the clearance revenue collected

[631] See S/2020/1275, Indonesia, South Africa and United Kingdom.
[632] Ibid., Belgium, South Africa and United Kingdom.
[633] S/2020/555 and S/2020/1234.
[634] See S/2020/596.

by Israel on the welfare of the Palestinian people.[635] Council members shared the Secretary-General's concerns and opposition to Israel's annexation plan and called for a restart of the peace negotiations.[636] On 29 September 2020, the Council held a meeting in the Economic and Social Council Chamber, which was the first meeting under this item since February 2020. During his briefing, the Special Coordinator presented his fifteenth report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016), covering the period from 5 June to 20 September.[637] He also noted the recent agreements between Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, and that the Secretary-General welcomed those agreements, which suspended Israeli annexation plans over parts of the occupied West Bank, and reiterated that only a two-State solution that realized the legitimate national aspirations of Palestinians and Israelis could lead to sustainable peace between the two peoples and contribute to broader peace in the region. He also reported on the various provisions of resolution 2334 (2016), including the settlement progress and demolition of Palestinian structures in the West Bank, acts of violence against civilians, including acts of terror, acts of provocation, incitement or inflammatory rhetoric, as well as on affirmative steps taken to reverse negative trends imperilling the two-State solution. The Special Coordinator also addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ground, which was having a devastating effect. In closing he reiterated the Secretary-General's call for the members of the Middle East Quartet, key Arab partners and the Israeli and Palestinian leadership to urgently re-engage and strengthen efforts to advance the goal of a negotiated two-State solution.[638] During the discussion, Council members called for the resumption of negotiations between the parties, a halt to the expansion of Israeli settlements and demolitions of Palestinian houses in the West Bank and for progress in intra-Palestinian reconciliation and elections. Some Council members welcomed President Abbas's call for an international conference with all concerned parties to engage in a peace

[635] Ibid.
[636] Ibid., St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Indonesia, Tunisia, United Kingdom, South Africa, Viet Nam, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger and Russian Federation.
[637] See S/PV.8762.
[638] Ibid.

process based on international law, United Nations resolutions and other internationally agreed parameters.[639]

In 2020, the practice of holding quarterly open debates was heavily impacted by the pandemic and the inability to hold them in the Security Council or the Economic and Social Council Chamber. As a result, further to the first open debate which took place on 21 and 22 January 2020, the members of the Council held videoconferences in connection with this item on 23 April, 21 July, and 26 October. In the context of these videoconferences, Council members delivered statements as did the representatives of Israel and Palestine.[640] In addition, in accordance with the written understanding reached among Council members for the conduct of videoconferences, written statements were submitted by Member States and other entities, later compiled in letters by the President of the Security Council. In his briefings during the quarterly videoconferences, the Special Coordinator focused on the prospect of annexation by Israel of parts of the occupied Palestinian territory as a result of the political agreement that opened the way to the formation of the national emergency government in Israel, the continued violence between Israelis and Palestinians, the humanitarian situation in Gaza as well as the dynamics created on the ground by the COVID-19 pandemic. He also touched upon the situations in Lebanon, the Golan, and the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). In January 2020, during the first open debate of the year under this item, the Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs as well as the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.[641] At that meeting, the Council also heard briefings by the Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States. The Under-Secretary-General recalled the Secretary-General's call on all leaders to exercise maximum restraint and emphasizing that the world could not afford another conflict. She stated that with the political process deadlocked, negative developments continued to undermine the prospects for a two-State

[639] Ibid., South Africa, China, Indonesia, Tunisia and Germany.
[640] See S/2020/341, S/2020/736 and S/2020/1055.
[641] See S/PV.8706. The first open debate of the year under this item took place over two days, 21 and 22 January 2020, due to the financial difficulties faced by the United Nations, which resulted in meetings of the Security Council being restricted to take place only from 10 am to 1 pm and from 3 pm to 6 pm.

solution, namely, the continued expansion of settlement activity and the threat of annexation of parts of the West Bank, and the ongoing clashes and arrests in East Jerusalem. Regarding Gaza, while still extremely fragile, she noted that there had been a notable and welcome reduction in violence in and around Gaza. Despite the progress in some areas, she also noted that humanitarian and economic steps would not resolve Gaza's immense challenges, since at their core these were political and required political solutions. She also reported on the statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, announcing that the preliminary examination by the Court had concluded with determination that all the statutory criteria under the Rome Statute for the opening of an investigation had been met. In doing so, she expressed the view that, among other things, war crimes had been or were being committed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. In closing, she emphasized the continued urgency of resolving the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements.[642] The Assistant Secretary-General briefed the Council on her six-day visit to Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory where she had met representatives of Palestinians and Israelis, as well as representatives of the international community. She stated that the meetings conveyed hardships, challenges and opportunities for positive change.[643] On 21 July 2020, the members of the Council held a videoconference in connection with this item. At the videoconference, Council members heard briefings by the Special Coordinator as well as by the Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, and the President of the United States/Middle East Project. In his briefing, the Special Coordinator warned the Council of the complex and destabilizing three-pronged crisis facing Palestinians and Israelis; an escalating health crisis as both struggled to contain the rapid spike of COVID-19 cases, a spiralling economic crisis as businesses closed, unemployment soared, protests increased, and the economy suffered the financial impact of months of lockdowns and restrictions, and finally, a mounting political confrontation, driven by the threat of Israeli annexation of parts of the occupied West Bank, and the steps taken in response by the Palestinian leadership. The Special Coordinator also informed the Council of the challenge in confronting

[642] See S/PV.8706.
[643] Ibid.

the rapid increase in COVID-19 cases in Gaza due the ending of coordination between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.[644] The President of the United States/Middle East Project suggested that the Security Council, along with the Secretary-General, explore a mechanism to assess and evaluate its record and effectiveness on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and that they examine convening a commission to appraise new approaches to resolve the long-standing conflict.[645] The Director of the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research urged Council members to protect the legitimacy of the international system and reject the United States' "Peace to Prosperity" proposal, which would jeopardize a two-state solution.

During the open debate and videoconferences, Council members reiterated their opposition to the annexation, citing violation of international law and hindrance to the peace process. Council members also called on Israel to cease the building of new settlements and the demolition of Palestinian houses and property. A number of Council members urged the international community to provide more support for Palestine, including through UNRWA, to provide necessary humanitarian assistance, noting the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.[646] A majority of Council members also expressed support for an international peace conference as proposed by the President of the Palestinian Authority in an effort to restart negotiations.[647] Some Council members reminded the Council of its responsibility and mandate to ensure implementation of its resolutions.[648]

Table 1
Meetings: The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

[644] See S/2020/736.
[645] Ibid.
[646] See S/PV.8706 Belgium, Germany, Niger, Tunisia, Estonia, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, China, Russia, Viet Nam and Peru; S/2020/341 Belgium and Germany, S/2020/736 China, France, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and S/2020/1055 Russia, Viet Nam, China, Dominican Republic, France, Indonesia, Niger and Tunisia.
[647] See S/2020/736, China, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam; and S/2020/1055, Viet Nam, China, France, Germany, Indonesia and South Africa.
[648] See S/PV.8706, South Africa; S/2020/736 , Tunisia; and S/2020/1055, Indonesia and South Africa. For further details on the discussion, see part V, sect. II.B.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8706 and S/PV.8706 (Resumption 1) 21 and 22 January 2020			32 Member States[a]	Seven invitees[b]	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8717 11 February 2020			Israel	Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, President of the Observer State of Palestine to the United Nations, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States	Secretary-General, all Council members,[c] all invitees	
S/PV.8730 24 February 2020				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process[d]	Special Coordinator	
S/PV.8762 29 September 2020				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process[d]	All Council members, Special Coordinator	

[a] Azerbaijan (also on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), Bahrain, Bangladesh (also on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation), Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Peru, Portugal (also on behalf of Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden and United Kingdom), Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Sudan (also on behalf of the Arab Group), the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.
[b] Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations
[c] The meeting was presided over by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defense of Belgium.
[d] The Special Coordinator joined via videoconference from Jerusalem.

Table 2
Videoconferences: The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 March 2020[a]	S/2020/263	Letter dated 31 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
23 April 2020	S/2020/341	Letter dated 27 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General	

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
20 May 2020	S/2020/430	Letter dated 22 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
24 June 2020	S/2020/596	Letter dated 26 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
21 July 2020	S/2020/736	Letter dated 23 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
25 August 2020	S/2020/837	Letter dated 27 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
26 October 2020	S/2020/1055	Letter dated 28 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
18 November 2020	S/2020/1128	Letter dated 20 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
21 December 2020	S/2020/1275	Letter dated 23 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[a] Due to technical difficulties, instead of open, the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

22. The situation concerning Iraq

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting in relation to the item entitled "The situation concerning Iraq", which took the form of a briefing.[649] More information on this meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held a total of four open videoconferences in connection with this item. The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2522 (2020), extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) until 31 May 2021.[650] More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole to discuss this item.[651]

In 2020, the Council heard regular briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on the situation concerning Iraq. In her four briefings further to the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General,[652] she informed Council members about the progress on the formation of a new Government and the preparation for elections in June 2021. She also spoke about the progress made regarding the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. The Special Representative also informed Council members about the vulnerable economic and security situation in Iraq, exacerbated by corruption, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued threat of terrorism by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh). The Special Representative reported on the ongoing mass protests, emphasizing the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. She also spoke about the serious human rights violations and abuses and the pressing need for accountability and justice. The Special Representative continued to inform the Council regarding the relations between Baghdad and Erbil and the status of negotiations between the Kurdish Regional Government and the federal Government.

[649] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[650] For more information on the mandate of UNAMI, part X, sect. II.
[651] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 29. See also S/2020/344.
[652] S/2020/140, S/2020/363, S/2020/792, and S/2020/1099.

At the beginning of 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported on the Prime Minister's announced resignation in late November 2019 and the failure of the designation of a new Prime Minister, as well as the subsequent challenges to form a new Government. She noted that the political uncertainty was eroding public trust. The Special Representative also highlighted that delivering on the demands of the people required a collective effort and that every single political actor and leader was fully responsible for restoring the critical confidence of the public in their Government and its institution. On the need for free, fair and credible elections, the Special Representative emphasized the importance of broad, fundamental systemic reform and a strong Independent High Electoral Commission and that the newly appointed Electoral Commission needed to demonstrate greater resolve in adhering to the principles of transparency, accountability, independence and professionalism. She stated that the volatile domestic and regional climate had taken an extraordinary toll on Iraq and that the state-to-state violence which had played out across Iraq earlier in the year was received as a clear and substantial threat to the country. The Special Representative affirmed that regional security developments should not eclipse domestic priorities and rightful demands for reform. The question was whether Iraq would flourish as a venue for peace and understanding or suffer as the arena of external battles.[653]

On 12 May 2020, against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Special Representative said that as the Iraqi health system was already near breaking point and that the first priority remained to prevent a rapid spread of the virus. She also echoed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. The Special Representative reported to Council members on the recent formation of a new Government, with the confirmation by the Council of Representatives of Mustafa Al-Kadhimi as the new Prime Minister and approval of his Government programme and ministers. Welcoming the long overdue development, she called for the swift completion of the remaining vacant positions, including the appointment of more women and minority representatives. She also noted that the economic situation had laid bare Iraq's vulnerability due to the grave lack of economic diversification and reiterated the need to broaden Iraq's revenue base by reducing its oil dependence among others. She also addressed the

[653] See S/PV.8739.

impact of COVID-19 on humanitarian access, noting that many access requests remained unapproved and that a practical, long-term solution was urgently required. She also said that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, and some of the activities had to be postponed.[654]

In her subsequent briefings to Council members, the Special Representative reported on the continued humanitarian challenges on the ground, and noted the increasing gender-based violence amid dwindling options for victims to seek assistance and find shelter. She called for a simplified system that enabled immobilized humanitarian actors and supplies to rapidly reach people in need while noting the hazardous conditions faced by humanitarian actors. The Special Representative also expressed concern with regards to the escalation in the Iraqi-Turkish border areas and urged both countries to resolve their differences through dialogue and cooperation with full respect for national sovereignty. She underlined the importance for Iraq to be given further room to focus on its domestic resilience instead of being used as a venue for different power struggles.[655] The Special Representative reported that the Parliament had recently finalized necessary electoral legislation and that UNAMI was ramping up its technical assistance in line with its mandate. In that connection, she further emphasized that Iraq's electoral institutional capacity needed to be strengthened and asked the relevant authorities to step up and think in terms of solutions instead of obstacles. She also reaffirmed that electoral preparations needed to remain free from political interference at all stages and made reference to the letter from the Government to the Security Council with a request "to obtain more support, technical assistance and electoral observation within the framework of UNAMI support to Iraq".[656]

During the period under review, Council members reaffirmed their support to the work and mandate of UNAMI, particularly its technical electoral assistance and efforts to promote political dialogue and reconciliation, as well as its engagement with the Women's Advisory Group for Politics and National Reconciliation in Iraq.[657] Some Council members called on the

[654] See S/2020/397.
[655] See S/2020/845.
[656] See S/2020/1144. See S/2020/1130.
[657] See S/PV.8739,United States, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, France, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; S/2020/397, Dominican Republic, Niger, South Africa and United Kingdom.

Iraqi authorities to continue implementing the recommendations of UNAMI to build on the progress, and encouraged the new Government to work closely with the Mission.[658] Council members also emphasized the importance of making progress on the political process and holding free, fair and inclusive elections in June 2021, and welcomed UNAMI's support, advice and technical assistance to Iraq in electoral preparations.[659] Some Council members also expressed concerns over the use of force against demonstrators and human rights violations in the context of public demonstrations and stressed the importance of ensuring the right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression and holding those responsible accountable.[660] On the new Iraqi Government, several Council members called for swift and effective action to implement reforms, including the participation of women and youth in Iraq's decision-making processes.[661] In that connection, some Council members spoke about the steady increase of gender-based violence cases, including domestic violence, and called on UNAMI to actively engage with civil society organizations to better address the issue and encouraged the Government to take concrete steps to ensure the protection of these victims.[662] Rejecting the attacks on the United States Embassy in Iraq and the Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Najaf, the representative of Iraq called on the Council to emphasize the need to respect Iraq's sovereignty, not to undermine its security and to assist its efforts to ensure stability.[663] In his interventions, the representative of Iraq also emphasized the importance of non-interference and respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq and establishing friendly relations and cooperation with its neighbours and the international community.[664]

On 29 May 2020, the Council extended the mandate of UNAMI through the unanimous adoption of resolution 2522 (2020) until 31 May 2021.[665] In the resolution, the Council

[658] See S/PV.8739, United Kingdom, France and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; S/2020/397, United Kingdom.
[659] See S/2020/1144, for example, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, p. 15 Germany, p. Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam.
[660] See S/PV.8739, for example, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Estonia, Belgium, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[661] See S/2020/397, for example, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, South Africa and United Kingdom.
[662] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa.
[663] See S/PV.8739.
[664] See S/PV.8739, S/2020/397, S/2020/845, and S/2020/1144.
[665] Resolution 2522 (2020), para. 1. See letter from the permanent representative of Iraq dated 27 May 2020 (S/2020/448).

commended the Government of Iraq's efforts to plan and execute free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraq-owned elections, and welcomed the Government's request for further UN electoral advice, support and assistance in that regard.[666] The Council decided that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNAMI would further advise, support and assist the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission with efforts to plan and execute free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraqi-owned elections and referenda, including through regular technical reviews and detailed reporting on electoral preparations and processes, as part of the Secretary-General's regular reporting cycle.[667] The Council also decided that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, at the request of the Government of Iraq and taking into account the letter from the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the Secretary-General (S/2020/448), should prioritize the provision of advice, support, and assistance to the Government and people of Iraq on advancing inclusive, political dialogue and national and community-level reconciliation.[668]

In addition, developments in 2020 relating to 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) were dealt with under the agenda item entitled "Threats to international peace and security".[669]

Table 1
Meetings: The situation concerning Iraq

[666] Resolution 2522 (2020), fifth preambular paragraph.
[667] Ibid., para. 2 (b). See letter from the permanent representative of Iraq dated 20 November 2020 (S/2020/1130).
[668] Resolution 2522 (2020), para. 2 (a).
[669] For further details, see part I, sect. 34.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8739 3 March 2020	Twenty-fifth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2020/133) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2470 (2019) (S/2020/140)		Iraq	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq	All Council members, all invitees	

Table 2
Videoconferences: The situation concerning Iraq

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
12 May 2020	S/2020/397	Letter dated 14 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 May 2020	S/2020/467	Letter dated 29 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2522 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/460(Record of written procedure)
26 August 2020	S/2020/845	Letter dated 28 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
24 November 2020	S/2020/1144	Letter dated 27 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Thematic issues

23. United Nations peacekeeping operations

During the period under review, the Security Council did not hold any meetings in connection with the item entitled "United Nations peacekeeping operations". Council members did, however, hold six open videoconferences in connection with this item. More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below. In addition, the Council adopted resolution 2518 (2020) of 30 March 2020 on the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and resolution 2538 (2020) of 28 August 2020 on the role of women in peacekeeping. The resolutions were announced in open videoconferences, according to the procedures established further to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.[670]

In 2020, Council members discussed the role of human rights in United Nations peacekeeping operations and also held their annual briefing on peacekeeping reform and meetings with selected force commanders and police commissioners. Council members were briefed twice by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and once each by the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the force commanders of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF), the police commissioners of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH), United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), as well as a non-governmental organization representative from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 30 March 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2518 (2020), by which it underscored the importance of ensuring that missions evolve their capacities and systems to remain agile and effective in implementing their mandates in specific operating contexts to enhance safety and security and mission protection, including through the provision of adequate

[670] For more information on the procedures working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

medical facilities and critical capabilities.[671] In this regard, the resolution requested the Secretary-General to continue to take all appropriate measures to strengthen, where necessary, the situational awareness of missions through measures to improve their information acquisition and analysis capacities.[672] The Council called for measures to enhance operational health support, ensure adequate medical facilities and the deployment of qualified personnel.[673] The Council requested the Secretary-General to review and ensure uniformity of United Nations standards on training and performance and on the United Nations to further operationalize the Light Coordination Mechanism, to facilitate and further coordinate improved training and capacity-building activities between Member States.[674] Moreover, troop- and police-contributing countries and field missions were encouraged to support field-focused, reliable and cost-effective new technologies.[675] The resolution further called upon Member States and the United Nations to ensure safe, enabling and gender-sensitive work environments for women in peacekeeping operations and to address threats and violence against them.[676]

On 4 June 2020, Council members held, in the context of an open videoconference, the annual briefing with selected force commanders of United Nations peacekeeping operations.[677] Opening the videoconference, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations stated that peacekeeping operations, including their military components, had shown their capacity to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic by protecting their personnel and capacity to conduct critical operations, containing and mitigating the spread of the virus, supporting national authorities in their responses, and protecting vulnerable communities. In the light of the pandemic, the Secretariat reprioritized activities on strengthening peacekeeping as part of the "Action for Peacekeeping" initiative to ensure a focus on specific objectives that could be delivered within the next few months.[678]

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[671] Resolution 2518 (2020), para. 4.
[672] Ibid., para. 5.
[673] Ibid., para. 9.
[674] Ibid., paras. 10 and 12.
[675] Ibid., para. 13.
[676] Ibid., para. 6.
[677] See S/2020/514.
[678] Ibid.

In addition to addressing the main challenges in their respective theaters of operation, the Force Commanders of MINUSMA and UNMISS and the Deputy Force Commander of UNDOF focused their remarks on the steps their missions had taken to prevent the spread of the pandemic and ensure the continuity of mandate operations. The Force Commander of MINUSMA noted that the Mission's military component had implemented a strict quarantine policy, strict prioritizations of air operations and specific instructions for patrols to limit interactions with the population. Notwithstanding these measures, he said he had made it clear that it was not the time for the force to take a step back. Instead, he said that the Mission would continue to focus on the core priorities of the mandate and, at the same time, set conditions for adaptation, focusing on finding a proper balance among ends, ways and means. He also noted that the Mission had made a great deal of improvement in the area of providing its peacekeepers with safety and security, and that there had been far fewer fatalities compared to the previous year. The Force Commander of UNMISS briefed Council members on the readjustment of the Mission's military component with a reduction of the number of troops conducting static protection duties at protection of civilians camps and their redeployment in conflict zones. The Deputy Force Commander of UNDOF informed Council members of plans and efforts to resume military inspections of the Alpha and Bravo sides of the ceasefire line. As key operational challenges, she noted ongoing violations of the Disengagement of Forces Agreement and a deteriorating security situation in the Dara'a governorate in the Syrian Arab Republic with a shift of security incidents closer to the Force's area of operations.

On 7 July 2020, at the initiative of Germany,[679] Council members held an open videoconference on peace operations and human rights chaired by the Federal Minister of Defence of Germany.[680] Briefing Council members, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights shared the view that human rights were central to the mandate of the Council to maintain international peace and security. Six peacekeeping operations and six special political missions had human rights components which contributed to the overall mission objectives to support political and peace processes. In this regard, the Call to Action for Human Rights of the

[679] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 26 June 2020 (S/2020/604).
[680] See S/2020/674.

Secretary-General was an important element in ensuring that human rights served as a shared effective basis of the United Nations system and in reinforcing collective engagement, contribution and the responsibility of all components of peace operations in advancing human rights.

The High Commissioner highlighted examples of the work and achievements of human rights components in peace operations, including on monitoring and reporting, conflict prevention and the protection of civilians, supporting accountability mechanisms, capacity-building, and the implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. Moreover, she stated that grounding regional operations in respect for human rights was crucial to their success, and noted that her Office was supporting the development of a compliance framework for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. The High Commissioner concluded by underlining that human rights components required resources and the strong political support of Council members to bind all peace operations around a common effective approach to crisis, from prevention to recovery.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of UNMISS stated that human rights was a core business of the Mission, as it was central both to peace and security and to the protection of civilians. UNMISS had structured its approach to human rights work into three broad streams, namely documentation and holding abusers to account through definitive reporting and rapid investigation, ending impunity and ensuring accountability by capacity-building through mobile courts and the strengthening of police and the judicial system, and engagement with the Government through action plans with national military and police forces and the forces of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition to create the conditions within these forces for the respect of human rights. Describing the situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the President of Groupe LOTUS and Honorary Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights noted the cooperation between the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO) within the United Nations Stabilization Operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and civil society organizations on information gathering and training, the provision of technical, logistical and security support, and advocacy and awareness-raising

during the COVID-19 pandemic. He emphasized the importance of strengthening political dialogue with the authorities at the national and local levels, of protecting civilians and of providing resources for UNJHRO-MONUSCO's activities. He also called for the strengthening of the presence of MONUSCO throughout the country and for more engagement between civil society and the Mission in future assessments and exit strategy planning efforts.

Council members and other Member States emphasized the important role of human rights to the achievement of the overall objectives of United Nations peacekeeping operations. As key elements for the effective implementation of human rights mandates, Council members and other Member States cited the need for peacekeeping mandates to be clear and achievable, adequate resources and expertise, training, and the increased deployment of women and their meaningful participation at all levels of decision-making. Several statements also underlined the importance of preventing and ensuring the accountability of peacekeepers for human rights violations, including sexual exploitation and abuse.[681] Some speakers expressed regret that the topic of human rights had been politicized.[682] The representatives of China and the Russian Federation stressed that human rights were auxiliary to the main objectives of peace operations, namely to support the political settlement of hotspot issues and to promote reconciliation and peacebuilding.[683] Some Council members also maintained that human rights mandates should be undertaken in a context-specific manner, taking into account the specific situation of the country and the mandate as well as the local customs and values.[684] Several speakers called for respect for the basic principles of peacekeeping in this context, including sovereignty and national ownership of human rights processes.[685] Some also highlighted the need for closer cooperation with host States, particularly on human rights capacity-building efforts.[686]

On 28 August 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2538 (2020) by which it called upon Member States, the Secretariat and regional organizations to strengthen their

[681] Ibid., China, Estonia, France, Viet Nam, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, India, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Nepal, and Peru.
[682] Ibid., Russian Federation, South Africa and Sri Lanka.
[683] Ibid., China and Russian Federation.
[684] Ibid., China, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and India.
[685] Ibid., China, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Viet Nam.
[686] Ibid., Indonesia, United Kingdom, France, Tunisia, and Morocco.

collective efforts to promote the full, effective, and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women in peacekeeping operations at all levels and in all positions, including in senior leadership.[687] The resolution requested Member States to implement a number of strategies and measures for this purpose, including: (a) disseminating information and providing access to deployment opportunities; (b) providing access to training; (c) developing a national database of trained women personnel; (d) identifying and addressing barriers in the recruitment, deployment, and promotion of women peacekeepers; (e) considering ways, as appropriate, to increase the participation of women in national militaries and police; (f) supporting the capacities of regional organizations in training; and (g) taking measures to provide support and incentives including child care and other relevant needs.[688] Furthermore, the Council called upon Member States and the Secretariat to ensure safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environments for women in peacekeeping operations and urged them, where appropriate, to provide adequate and appropriate infrastructure and facilities for women in the missions.[689] In the resolution, the Council also urged peacekeeping operations to promote full, effective and meaningful participation of women in all components and functions and at all levels at headquarters and in the field, including through the establishment of mixed engagement teams.[690]

On 14 September 2020, at an open videoconference, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations provided his annual briefing to Council members, further to resolution 2378 (2017), on efforts to strengthen peacekeeping as part of the "Action for Peacekeeping" initiative.[691] He stated that the challenging COVID-related circumstances had not impeded peacekeeping missions to provide effective support to political processes and the implementation of peace agreements. He also expressed encouragement fromthe progress made on the women and peace and security agenda which was enabled by a greater focus on data-driven tracking and noted the expansion of political space forwomen's participation and leadership in peace and political processes across peacekeeping contexts. He also observed that although the pandemic

[687] Resolution 2538 (2020), para. 1. The resolution was sponsored by all Council members. For further information on sponsorship of resolutions, see part II, sect. IX. B.
[688] Resolution 2538 (2020), para. 2.
[689] Ibid., para. 6.
[690] Ibid., para. 12.
[691] S/2020/911.

had affected the footprint of missions and restricted some patrolling, missions had taken creative steps to continue their protection work. More broadly, across the four large multidimensional missions, he said that major force transformation processes had been conducted to shift mission postures and presence in order to strengthen strategic flexibility and operational adaptation. Progress was also made in improving mission performance with the roll out of the comprehensive performance assessment system and the finalization of the integrated peacekeeping performance and accountability framework. Measures were taken to ensure the operational readiness, including COVID-19 preparedness, of military and police units, increased representation of women at both Headquarters and in missions, as well as to strengthen the safety and security of personnel, and to strengthen partnerships with regional organizations and troop- and police-contributing countries.

Looking ahead, the Under-Secretary-General stated that, two years after the launch of the initiative, the Secretariat had developed strategic priorities for the next phase of its implementation. In this regard, it was necessary to, inter alia, link all peacekeeping actions to overarching political strategies that furthered positive peace, ensure more substantive and strategic integration with development and peacebuilding actors, further enhance performance and accountability, and implement the United Nations action plan for improving the security of United Nations peacekeeping. He also addressed the need to apply a gender perspective across all areas of work. In their remarks, Council members welcomed the progress made on peacekeeping reform and recognized the challenges and versatility of peacekeeping operations in adapting their work to the pandemic. Council members stressed the importance of continuing to strengthen performance and accountability frameworks. Discussions also addressed the need for sufficient resources and capacities, including training and equipment, further improvements on safety and security, strengthening cooperation with troop- and police-contributing countries and regional organizations, and to increase the number of women personnel.

On 4 November 2020, Council members held the annual meeting with police commissioners via an open videoconference. In his opening remarks, the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions provided an overview and examples of the work of police components in peace operations on partnerships with regional organizations, the

protection of civilians, the implementation of performance evaluation standards and training, gender-responsive policing and enhancing women's participation, and reinforcing the zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse.[692]

The Police Commissioner of BINUH highlighted the capacity-building work of the Mission's police component in support of the Haitian National Police to improve labour relations, achieve gender equality and prevent sexual and gender-based violence. The Police Commissioner of UNMISS stated that, with the onset of the pandemic, the Mission's police component had reduced its footprint inside of protection of civilians sites, but continued to respond to security situations and provide technical support to the South Sudan National Police Service, and also conducted sensitization activities on COVID-19. The police component was also playing a key role in the redesignation of protection of civilians sites to internally displaced persons camps.

The Police Commissioner of MINUSCA underlined that, in order to further improve the performance of the United Nations police, it was necessary to provide them with "attention, space and breathing room". In this regard, he noted the accomplishments of the Mission's police component in, inter alia, the use of community policing to improve the security situation in the PK5 district of Bangui, support elections, and maintain resilience during the pandemic. The Police Commissioner of MINUSMA underscored the important contribution of police components in the transitions from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and to the success of exit strategies, as well as their supporting role in political processes and conflict resolution. In their remarks, Council members addressed various aspects of the function of police components, including their role in protecting civilians, the need to allocate sufficient and sustainable financial, operational and human resources as well as the need to further improve their performance and accountability. Moreover, several Council members called for gender-responsive policing as well as for the equal participation of women in police components. The representative of Tunisia, speaking on behalf of the A3+1, namely the African members of the Council and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, requested the Secretary-General to submit to the

[692] See S/2020/1092.

Council a report on developments regarding United Nations policing in 2021, as the last report on United Nations policing had been issued in 2018.

Videoconferences: United Nations peacekeeping operations

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 March 2020[a]	S/2020/268	Letter dated 30 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2518 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/249 (Record of written procedure)
4 June 2020	S/2020/514	Letter dated 8 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
7 July 2020	S/2020/674	Letter dated 9 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
28 August 2020	S/2020/856	Letter dated 28 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2538 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/851 (Record of written procedure)
14 September 2020	S/2020/911	Letter dated 16 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
4 November 2020	S/2020/1092	Letter dated 6 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[a] Due to technical difficulties, instead of an open videoconference to announce the vote on resolution 2518 (2020) the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

24. International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

During 2020, the Security Council held one meeting for the issuance of a presidential statement related to the work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.[693] More information on the meeting, including on participants and outcome, is provided in table 1 below. Council members also held a total of three open videoconferences and adopted one resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter in connection with this item. The resolution was announced in an open videoconference, according to the procedures established further to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.[694] More information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below.

On 28 February 2020, the Council issued a presidential statement by which it recalled that the Mechanism should be a small, temporary and efficient structure, whose functions and size would diminish over time.[695] It also recalled its decision that the Mechanism should operate for an initial period of four years starting from 1 July 2012 as well as its further decision that the Mechanism should continue to operate for subsequent periods of two years further to its review.[696] The Council requested the Mechanism to present by 15 April 2020 its report on the progress of its work since the last review of the Mechanism in June 2018, including in completing its functions, with detailed schedules for the proceedings currently under consideration as well as factors relevant to projected completion dates.[697] By the presidential statement, the Council requested the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals to carry out a thorough examination of the Mechanism's report, as well as the report on the evaluation of the methods and work of the Mechanism by the Office of Internal Oversight Services and to

[693] For further information on the format of meetings, see part II. For further information on the International Residual Mechanism for International Tribunals, see *Repertoire*, Supplement 2018 and for the issues considered under this item, see also previous Supplements covering the period 1996-2007.
[694] For more information on the procedure and working methods of the Security Council developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[695] S/PRST/2020/4, second paragraph.
[696] Ibid., third paragraph.
[697] Ibid., fifth paragraph.

present its views and any findings or recommendations for the Council's consideration in its review of the work of the Mechanism.[698]

On 8 June 2020, Council members held a videoconference in which they heard the semi-annual briefings by the President of the Mechanism and by its Prosecutor. At the meeting, the President presented the latest report on the work of the Mechanism, submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution 1966 (2010).[699] In their statements, the President and the Prosecutor affirmed that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mechanism had remained operational and ensured full business continuity in an effective manner. While the pandemic had affected in-court proceedings, cases had progressed with relatively few disruptions. Nonetheless, cases that were on track to conclude by the end of 2020 were then expected to conclude in the first part of 2021. In addition to providing a detailed account of the trials and proceedings during the reporting period, the President and the Prosecutor highlighted the arrest of Félicien Kabuga and the confirmation of the death of Augustin Bizimana, two of the three main fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and thanked the contribution of France and the other Member States and actors in the achievements. The Prosecutor affirmed that the role of the Council had been decisive in that regard, repeatedly calling upon all Member States to provide cooperation in the search for the fugitives and assisting the Mechanism in obtaining the needed intelligence and information to move the investigations forward. In that context, the President and the Prosecutor encouraged cooperation and trust in bringing more fugitives to justice. With regard to the situation of the nine acquitted and released persons in Arusha, the President reiterated that the Mechanism could not resolve the issue on its own and urged the Council's support to help end that "untenable situation". On the issue of early release, the President reported on a revised Practice Direction on the applications of pardon, commutation of sentence or early release to clarify the procedures involved and ensure a streamlined process. Marking the 25th anniversaries of the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, the President reminded delegations of the perils of endemic hatred, division and denial. The Prosecutor regretted that he had repeatedly reported to the Council that the denial of crimes and

[698] Ibid., sixth paragraph.
[699] See S/2020/309.

glorification of convicted war criminals remained immense challenges and called upon all officials and public figures to publicly condemn such acts. The Prosecutor concluded by welcoming the recognition in the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)[700] of his Office's commitment to the Security Council's vision of the Mechanism as "a small, temporary and efficient structure" and to have also favourably assessed the Mechanism's work and innovative methods.[701]

During the discussion, Council members welcomed the Mechanism's efforts aimed at limiting as much as possible the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its activities. Council members also commended the international cooperation efforts with the Office of the Prosecutor, which had successfully resulted in the arrest of Félicien Kabuga. In that connection, several speakers reiterated their calls on relevant Member States to provide the necessary assistance to the Office of the Prosecutor with the search and arrest of the remaining six fugitives indicted by the ICTR.[702] The representative of South Africa acknowledged the country's lack of cooperation concerning a fugitive located on its territory in mid-2018. He expressed regret that challenges presented by South Africa's domestic law had unfortunately constrained the country's cooperation until December 2019 and noted, however, that this had since been addressed. Several delegations applauded the Mechanism's efforts to integrate a gender perspective into its work and activities.[703] Speakers welcomed the fact that the Mechanism had implemented most of the recommendations made by OIOS in 2018 and 2019.[704] In that connection and due to the impact of COVID-19 on the anticipated timelines, some Council members encouraged the management of the Mechanism to make necessary adjustments to implement the recommendations of OIOS to adhere to clear and focused projections of completion timelines.[705]

[700] See S/2020/236.
[701] See S/2020/527.
[702] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, and United States.
[703] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and Tunisia.
[704] Ibid., Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and United Kingdom.
[705] Ibid., Indonesia and Russian Federation.

On 25 June 2020, the Council adopted, non-unanimously, resolution 2529 (2020),[706] under Chapter VII of the Charter, by which it appointed the Prosecutor of the Mechanism with effect from 1 July 2020 until 30 June 2022.[707] In the resolution, the Council continued to urge all States to intensify their cooperation with and render all necessary assistance to the Mechanism, in particular to achieve the arrest and surrender of all remaining fugitives indicted by the ICTR as soon as possible.[708] In that regard, the Council welcomed the arrest of Félicien Kabuga, indicted for genocide and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Rwanda in 1994, commended the cooperation between the Office of the Prosecutor, and law enforcement and judicial authorities in France and the other actors which had contributed to the arrest of the fugitive, and recognized that was an important step of cooperation with the Mechanism.[709] The Council welcomed the report submitted by the Mechanism to the Council and the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the methods and work of the Mechanism.[710] In that regard, the Council requested the Mechanism to implement the recommendations made by the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals and to continue to take steps to further enhance its efficiency and effective and transparent management, including the production of clear and focused projections of completion timelines at the earliest stage possible and disciplined adherence thereto.[711] The Council also requested the Mechanism to include in its six-monthly reports to the Council information on progress achieved in implementing resolution 2529 (2020).[712] With a view to strengthening independent oversight of the Mechanism, the Council recalled that, as set out in its presidential statement of 28 February 2020, future reviews carried out pursuant to paragraph 17 of resolution 1966 (2010) should include evaluation reports sought from OIOS with respect to the methods and work of the Mechanism.[713] In the explanation of the vote submitted

[706] *In favour*: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; *Abstaining*: Russian Federation.
[707] Resolution 2529 (2020), para. 1.
[708] Ibid., para. 3.
[709] Ibid., para. 5.
[710] Ibid., para. 7. See also S/2020/309 and S/2020/236.
[711] Ibid., para. 9.
[712] Ibid., para. 10.
[713] Ibid., para. 14.

by the delegation of the Russian Federation,[714] the delegation noted that it had consistently abstained in the voting on draft resolutions on the extension of the work of the Mechanism due to its unsatisfactory work, which continued not to allow the Council to proceed with its legal closure. One of the major problems raised by the delegation was the absence of a judicial planning system. Additionally, the delegation expressed concern about the protection of rights of persons detained under the authority of the Mechanism, in particular the quality and timeliness of the medical care provided to them.

On 14 December 2020, in an open videoconference, Council members heard the second semi-annual briefings by the President of the Mechanism and its Prosecutor in which they presented the latest progress report on the work of the Mechanism.[715] During the videoconference, the President reflected on the 10th anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1966 (2010) and on how the flexible approach adopted by the Mechanism during the COVID-19 global pandemic had enabled the Mechanism to remain operational. In view of the latest developments, the President stated that the Mechanism was poised to conclude a significant proportion of its pending judicial caseload by the end of May 2021. The President and the Prosecutor provided details about their activities and results during the reporting period. They also laid out the priorities for the Mechanism to fulfill its mandate, including the search for the remaining fugitives at large indicted by the ICTR, the relocation of the nine acquitted and released persons by the ICTR, as well as the assistance to national jurisdictions prosecuting international crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In that respect, the President noted that the Mechanism was gratified to note the terms of resolution 2529 (2020), in which the Council urged all States to intensify their cooperation with, and render all the necessary assistance to, the Mechanism regarding the remaining ICTR fugitives, as well as the protracted situation of the nine acquitted and released individuals in Arusha. The Prosecutor added that in order for that work to be successfully completed, it was critical for the Council to

[714] See S/2020/602, p. 21. For more information on the procedure and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[715] See S/2020/763.

send an unmistakable message that Member States should treat the matter as an urgent priority and offer his Office their full cooperation.[716]

Council members commended the Mechanism for the measures taken to efficiently continue its operations despite the constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, welcoming, in particular, the fact that in-court proceedings, previously postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions, had resumed in August 2020. Delegations welcomed the progress made in important rulings, including *Prosecutor v. Ratko Mladić, Prosecutor v. Stanišić and Simatović* as well as the transfer of Félicien Kabuga to the Mechanism's custody and the subsequent commencement of the new pre-trial proceedings in his case. Several delegations acknowledged the issue of relocating individuals who had been acquitted and released by the ICTR hoping the matter would be resolved.[717] In connection with the remaining six fugitives indicted by the ICTR, a majority of Council members urged States, especially States where fugitives were suspected of being at large, to intensify their cooperation with the Mechanism and to arrest and surrender all of the remaining fugitives.[718] In that regard, the delegation of South Africa assured Council members that the recommendations made by the Prosecutor would receive the necessary attention by the Government and reaffirmed their determination to continue all efforts to trace and surrender the fugitives from justice. Additionally, the delegation of the Russian Federation stated that although in resolution 2529 (2020) the Security Council had indicated the need to uphold the rights of persons held in custody, including the right to medical attention, the report failed to inform the Council on how those rights were being implemented. The delegation expressed particular concern regarding the health of General Ratko Mladić. Marking the commemorations of the events which had taken place in Rwanda and in the Western Balkans in the 1990s, a number of Council members condemned the continued denial of genocide and war

[716] See S/2020/1236.
[717] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, and Viet Nam.
[718] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United States and pp. 30-31 (Viet Nam).

crimes and the glorification of war criminals, and urged those responsible to refrain from statements denying the crimes committed.[719]

During the period under review, the Council also took note of the intention of the Secretary-General to renew the mandate of the President of the Mechanism for a new term of office, as well as to reappoint 25 nominated judges, all with effect from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022.[720]

Table 1
Meetings: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8737 28 February 2020						S/PRST/2020/4

Table 2
Videoconferences: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
8 June 2020	S/2020/527	Letter dated 10 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
25 June 2020	S/2020/602	Letter dated 26 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2529 (2020) 14-0-1[a] (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/590 (Record of written procedure)
14 December 2020	S/2020/1236	Letter dated 18 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[719] Ibid., Belgium, France, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, and United States.
[720] See S/2020/580 and S/2020/581. See also S/2020/616. For more information on actions of the Security Council concerning judges of the Mechanism, see part IV, sect. I. D and part IX, sect. IV.

[a] For: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; abstaining: Russian Federation.

25. Children and armed conflict

During the period under review, the Security Council held two meetings, including one high-level meeting, and issued two presidential statements in connection with the item entitled "Children and armed conflict". The meetings took the form of a briefing and a debate.[721] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held one open videoconference under this item.[722] More information on the videoconference is provided in table 2 below.[723]

In 2020, discussions in the Security Council focused on the integration of child protection issues into peace processes and peace agreements, attacks against schools and the impact of armed conflict on children's education, and the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict for 2019.[724] Council members were briefed twice by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The Council also received briefings by the Secretary-General, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, and four representatives of civil society.

On 12 February 2020, at the initiative of Belgium which held the Presidency for the month,[725] the Council held a high-level briefing under the sub-item entitled "Integrating child protection into peace processes".[726] At the outset of the meeting, the Council issued a presidential statement renewing its call to Member States, United Nations entities, the Peacebuilding Commission, and other parties concerned, to integrate child protection provisions at the early stages of all peace processes.[727] The Council commended the work by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, together with relevant

[721] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[722] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 14.
[723] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[724] See report of the Secretary-General on Children and armed conflict dated 9 June 2020 (S/2020/525).
[725] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated (S/2020/97).
[726] S/PV.8721.
[727] S/PRST/2020/3, seventh paragraph.

child protection actors, to develop a United Nations practical guidance on the integration of child protection into peace processes, and encouraged the Secretary-General to broadly disseminate the practical guidance.[728] The presidential statement further encouraged mediators, facilitators and other negotiators, including Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations, to use the practical guidance as a tool in peace and mediation processes.[729]

In his remarks, the Secretary-General stated that children under the age of 18 made up more than half of the population in countries affected by war and were among the most vulnerable. Notwithstanding the progress made in raising awareness on the issue of children in armed conflict in the past 21 years, including through the engagement of the Council, he noted that the figures on grave violations against children continued to rise. According to the Secretary-General, the practical guidance for mediators being launched by the Secretariat was the next step in the overall strategy to put children at the heart of protection, peacebuilding and prevention efforts. The guidance recognized that children's needs and rights had to be considered in all phases of conflict, from prevention to mediation and recovery, through sustainable inclusive development. The Secretary-General added that, as important as the guidance was, it was not enough, and urged all Member States to take concrete action to prioritize the protection of children at the national, regional and global levels.[730]

The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security stated that it was critical that all actors engaged in mediation and peace processes incorporated child protection language and provisions in peace agreements, and cited the peace agreements in Burundi, Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Sudan as examples of the efforts of the African Union and regional economic communities and mechanisms in that regard. He described the practical guidance as an invaluable tool for African Union mediators, envoys and Member States engaged in peace processes.[731] In her statement, the Chair of the Advisory Board of Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, a global network of human rights and humanitarian organizations, observed

[728] Ibid., ninth and tenth paragraphs. See letter dated 11 February 2020 from the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council, enclosing the *Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict* (S/2020/114).
[729] Ibid., thirteenth paragraph.
[730] See S/PV.8721, p. 3.
[731] Ibid.

that peace agreements that addressed child protection remained the exception, not the norm. In this regard, she explained that Watchlist had prepared a checklist of provisions related to children and armed conflict in ceasefire and peace agreements which inspired the guidance that was being launched by the United Nations and Member States. Some of the key components identified included prioritizing child protection in the agendas of peace talks from the very beginning, ensuring that all parties explicitly agreed to end the six grave violations against children, as well as including provisions in peace agreements addressing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration for children associated with armed forces, education, post-conflict programming, transitional justice, accountability and reparations and monitoring of child protection provisions. The Chair urged the Council to take a series of steps, including, among others, to request that all conflict analyses included an assessment of the impact of armed conflict on children to ensure that such issues were dealt with at the beginning of any peace effort; to ensure that country-specific resolutions on peace processes emphasized the need for explicit and comprehensive provisions for child protection; to urge mediators, the United Nations, parties to conflict and other stakeholders to ensure the meaningful participation of affected children and that their views were taken into account and to insist that the Secretary-General's annual list of perpetrators of violations against children be accurate and evidence based, utilizing the data collected by the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict established through resolution 1612 (2005).

The King of the Belgians spoke first immediately after the briefers and stated that saving children affected by conflict required an ongoing policy, joint prevention and remediation efforts and the tireless marshalling of financial and human resources. He also affirmed it would be possible to make lasting peace by listening to them, acknowledging their suffering and reintegrating them into society through unrelenting support. In their deliberations, Council members welcomed the launching of the practical guidance which some considered a "living document".[732] Council members also called for its implementation by all concerned and underlined the importance for peace processes and agreements to address child protection concerns as a requirement for achieving durable peace. In this regard, some Council members

[732] Ibid., Viet Nam and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

highlighted the potential for collaboration with regional organizations in the protection of children such as the African Union,[733] the Intergovernmental Authority on Development,[734] and the European Union.[735] Several Council members expressed the view that child protection issues had to be taken into account at all phases of armed conflict,[736] from prevention to peacebuilding as well as the views of children on issues affecting them.[737] A number of Council members emphasized the importance of inclusive and comprehensive reintegration programmes for children.[738]

At the videoconference held on 24 June 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict cited three positive developments on the children and armed conflict agenda in 2019. First, the adoption by parties to conflict of over 30 action plans, road maps, command orders and other measures to better protect children. Secondly, the search for peace in 2019 had yielded seven different peace dialogues and processes in children and armed conflict situations. Thirdly, the release of some 13,200 children by parties to conflict as a result of advocacy by the United Nations. Presenting the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict for 2019, she noted that the number of grave violations against children, despite having decreased from 2018, remained very high with more than 25,000 being verified by the United Nations. Noting that the monitoring and reporting mechanism was only as strong as the resources and capacities available for its functioning, the Special Representative said that the Council and the Fifth Committee had to ensure that, when a new peacekeeping or political mission was set up or the budget of existing missions was negotiated, enough child-protection capacity was mandated and retained.[739]

The Executive Director of UNICEF noted the progress achieved since the adoption of resolution 1612 (2005) by the Council and the establishment of the monitoring and reporting mechanism, including on the release of children from armed forces and groups, engagement with

[733] Ibid., France.
[734] Ibid., Viet Nam.
[735] Ibid., Germany.
[736] Ibid., Indonesia, South Africa and Russian Federation.
[737] Ibid., United Kingdom, Dominican Republic and South Africa.
[738] Ibid., Indonesia, South Africa, Viet Nam, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Russian Federation, China and Germany.
[739] See S/2020/594.

parties to conflict, and the definition of normative frameworks. She stressed the need for the Council to call for action in five key areas, namely, the signing of action plans by parties to conflict, the immediate release of children in detention, the repatriation of nationals and their children, investment in education and vocational training for reintegrated children, as well as urgent action to respect and protect water and sanitation infrastructure.[740] At the videoconference, Council members also heard a statement by Mariam, a member of the National Children's Parliament of Mali. She elaborated on the consequences of wars and conflicts for children, including killings, abduction or forcible recruitment by armed groups, deprivation of education, family separation, and rape. She asked Member States to take actions to protect children, including in times of conflict and war, expressed the wish of children to participate in decision-making that concerned them, and called on Council members to help improve the living conditions of children and to prevent them from being victims of conflict.

In their statements, Council members and other speakers condemned the scale of violations against children committed in the past 15 years, a situation which had been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Speakers noted the progress made on the children and armed conflict agenda since the adoption of resolution 1612 (2005), in particular through the work of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism and the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and the corresponding listing procedure. Speakers widely underscored the crucial importance of safe access to education for children, with some also stressing the importance of comprehensive reintegration programs.[741] A number of speakers condemned the disproportionate impact of conflict on girls, including acts of sexual violence and the denial of access to education.[742] Many speakers also drew attention to violations against children committed by terrorist and extremist armed groups.[743]

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[740] Ibid.
[741] Ibid., Belgium, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Viet Nam, Argentina, Austria, Chile, El Salvador, European Union, Greece, Malta, Mexico, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.
[742] Ibid., France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom, Afghanistan, Argentina, Canada, El Salvador, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.
[743] Ibid., Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United States, Afghanistan, Angola, Egypt, India, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

On 10 September 2020, at the initiative of Niger which held the Presidency for the month, the Council held an open debate under the sub-item entitled "Attacks against schools as a grave violation of children's rights".[744] At the outset of the meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement, reaffirming the right of children to education and the contribution of education to the achievement of peace and security.[745] The Council reiterated its strong condemnation of attacks as well as threats of attacks in contravention of applicable international humanitarian law against schools, children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools and urged all parties to armed conflict to immediately cease such attacks and threats and to refrain from actions that impede children's access to education.[746] The Council also expressed deep concern at the military use of schools in contravention of applicable international humanitarian law and urged all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian character of schools in accordance with international humanitarian law.[747] Condemning the lack of accountability for violations committed against children, teachers and other persons entitled to protection who are connected to schools in armed conflict, the Council urged Member States to ensure that attacks on persons entitled to protection connected to schools and on schools in contravention of international humanitarian law, were investigated and those responsible duly prosecuted.[748] The Council urged Member States to develop effective measures to prevent and address attacks and threats of attacks against schools, including, as appropriate, through the development of domestic legal frameworks to ensure respect for their relevant international legal obligations.[749]

In her statement to the Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict expressed concern about the negative trend of attacks against schools and what appeared to be an emerging tactic of war, particularly in the Sahel, made even worse by the pandemic. She urged all parties to conflict to better protect students and education

[744] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 1 September 2020 (S/2020/881).
[745] S/PRST/2020/8, sixth paragraph.
[746] Ibid., seventh paragraph.
[747] Ibid., eighth paragraph.
[748] Ibid., eleventh paragraph.
[749] Ibid., fourteenth paragraph.

personnel, and to respect the civilian nature of school infrastructure.[750] The Executive Director of UNICEF noted that one-fifth of the 494 verified attacks on schools in 2019 took place in West and Central Africa, including in the Sahel region. She explained that the denial of education was just part of the challenge faced by children and that out-of-school children were at higher risk of recruitment by armed forces or groups, gender-based violence, child marriage and early pregnancy, abuse and trafficking. She called on donor Governments to commit to multi-year, flexible funding to help communities rebuild education systems over the longer term. The Executive Director further called on Council members to lend their voice and influence to condemn all attacks on schools and children, to take concrete measures to fulfill obligations and commitments to protect education from attack and to end impunity for those who violated international law. She also encouraged future Council Presidents to make education under attack a regular thematic topic for the Council's deliberations on a sustained basis during the year.[751]

The representative of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, a civil society organization, described the Sahel region as an area of critical concern. She called on the Council to continue to lead the agenda on ending attacks on education and holding the perpetrators of such violations accountable. Among other steps, she urged the Council to ensure that United Nations peace operations and special political missions had a child-protection mandate and the backing necessary to effectively monitor and report on attacks on education and the military use of schools, including through more consistent disaggregation of data related to attacks on education. Two civil society representatives from Niger, Hadiza and Rimana Youssouf Assane Mayaki, the latter a representative of the Youth Parliament of Niger, further described the impact of armed conflict on the education of children in Niger and the Sahel region. Hadiza called on the Council to ensure the protection of children from attacks and safeguard the rights and duties of children and United Nations entities to mobilize international cooperation to fight the increased threat of attacks against schools by parties to armed conflict and to step up international efforts towards the prevention of violence against children.

[750] See S/PV.8756.
[751] Ibid.

In their statements, Council members and other participants at the meeting underscored the importance of respecting the civilian character of schools and ensuring access to quality education for all children, especially for girls and other children in vulnerable situations. Council members and non-members alike called on Member States to strengthen the protection of children and education in armed conflict and to join the Safe Schools Declaration.[752]

In 2020, the Council addressed the children and armed conflict agenda in a number of its country- and region-specific decisions as well as in decisions relating to thematic items. Selected provisions of decisions in which the Council explicitly referenced actions or measures concerning the children and armed conflict agenda during 2020 are listed in table 3. In 2020, the Council, inter alia, (i) condemned and demanded the cessation of violations and abuses against children, including attacks on schools and deprivation of access to education, and called for accountability and compliance with international instruments; (ii) called for the implementation of action plans and programmes on children and armed conflict, with new emphasis on preventing and responding to sexual violence against children, (iii) underscored the importance of taking into account child protection concerns in the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration processes and security sector reform, with a particular focus on practical measures to ensure the protection of schools; (iv) requested monitoring, analysis and reporting on violations and abuses against children; (v) mandated United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions with child protection tasks; (vi) imposed or called for the imposition of measures against perpetrators of violations and abuses against children; and (vii) strengthened its calls for the integration of child protection considerations into peace processes and peace agreements.

[752] Ibid., Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany and United Kingdom; and S/2020/906, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, Ireland, Luxembourg, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, and Uruguay.

Table 1
Meetings: Children and armed conflict

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8721 12 February 2020	Integrating child protection into peace processes Letter dated 5 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/97)			African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Chair of the Advisory Board of Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict	Secretary-General, 13 Council members,[ab] all invitees[c]	S/PRST/2020/3
S/PV.8756 10 September 2020	Attacks against schools as a grave violation of children's rights Letter dated 1 September 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/881)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Executive Director of UNICEF, representative of the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attacks, Hadiza, and a representative of the Youth Parliament of the Niger	12 Council members[d], all invitees[ef]	S/PRST/2020/8

[a] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger and Tunisia), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
[b] Belgium was represented by His Majesty King Philippe of the Belgians, as well as its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence. Indonesia was represented by its Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. Estonia was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.
[c] The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security participated in the meeting via videoconference from Addis Ababa.
[d] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
e The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Executive Director of UNICEF, Hadiza, and representative of the Youth Parliament of Niger participated in the meeting via videoconference.
[f] In accordance with the procedures agreed upon by Council members during the COVID-19 pandemic, including those related to the conduct of in-person meetings, statements by Member States not members of the Council and other entities were submitted in writing and circulated as an official document of the Council (S/2020/906). For more information on the working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II, sect. I.

Table 2
Videoconferences: Children and armed conflict

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
24 June 2020	S/2020/594	Letter dated 26 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/594)	

Table 3
Selection of provisions relevant to children and armed conflict, by theme and agenda item

	Agenda item	*Decision*	*Paragraph*
Condemnation of, and demands for cessation of, violations and abuses against children and calls for accountability and compliance with international instruments			
Country and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2513 (2020)	5
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	23
	The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	6, 11, 12, 13, 54(c)
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	6
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	33
		Resolution 2540 (2020)	9, 12
		Resolution 2554 (2020)	20
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	29
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	25
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/3	Second, third, seventeenth
		S/PRST/2020/8	Sixth, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, fourteenth, twenty-sixth
Action plans and programmes on children and armed conflict			
Country and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2543 (2020)	6(g)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	23
	The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	11, 29(ii)(k)
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	55

	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	33
		Resolution 2540 (2020)	9, 12
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	29, 30
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	2(iii)(d)
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Eighth, fourteenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth
Child protection in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration and security sector reform			
Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	11, 32(c)(i), 43
	The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	17, 19, 29(ii)(g), 29(ii)(i), 31
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	28(a)(iii), 55
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	8(a)(vi), 29
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	2(ii)(b)
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/3	Fifteenth, sixteenth
		S/PRST/2020/8	Fifteenth
	Maintenance of international peace and security	Resolution 2553 (2020)	8
Monitoring, analysis and reporting on violations and abuses against children			
Country and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2543 (2020)	6(g)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	32(d)(ii)
	The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	31
	The situation in Libya	Resolution 2542 (2020)	1(ix), 8
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	28(e)(ii)
	Repots of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	8(d)(ii)
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	26
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Twelfth, thirteenth
Child protection mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions			
Country and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2543 (2020)	6(f), 6(g)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	31(a)(iii), 32(c)(i), 43
	The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	29(i)(c), 29 (ii)(g) 29(ii)(i), 29(ii)(k), 31
	The situation in Iraq	Resolution 2522 (2020)	2(f)
	The situation in Libya	Resolution 2542 (2020)	8
	The situation Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	28(a)(iii), 28(c)(iii), 28(e)(ii), 53, 55
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2540 (2020)	5(h)

	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	8(a)(i), 8(a)(vi), 8(a)(vii), 19, 30
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	2(ii)(b), 2(iii)(d)
Thematic		Resolution 2550 (2020)	27
	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Twenty-first
Measures against the perpetrators of violations and abuses against children			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	13
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2511 (2020)	6
		Resolution 2551 (2020)	21
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2521 (2020)	15(d), 15(f), 21
Integration of child protection into peace processes and peace agreements			
Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	23
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	54
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/3	Seventh, eighth, twelfth, thirteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth

26. Protection of civilians in armed conflict

During the period under review, the Security Council held no meetings in connection with the item entitled "Protection of civilians in armed conflict". Council members did, however, hold four open videoconferences in connection with the item.[753] More information on the videoconferences is given in table 1 below.[754]

On 21 April 2020, at the initiative of the Dominican Republic, which held the Presidency for the month, the Council held an open videoconference entitled "Protection of civilians from conflict-induced hunger".[755] At the videoconference, the Council was briefed by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the Executive Director of the s World Food Programme (WFP), as well as by the Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council. At the outset, the Director-General of FAO welcomed the Council's engagement on the subject and its continued recognition of the relationship between conflict and hunger. He focused his remarks on how the 2020 Global Report on Food Crises clearly showed the link between conflict and rising levels of acute food insecurity, especially in contexts of instability, such as in South Sudan, Yemen and the Sahel. In that connection, he stated that FAO's experience showed that interventions supporting livelihoods and food security contributed to local peace and broader peace processes, as they addressed not only the symptoms but also the root causes of conflict. He stressed that conflict prevention and acting early to reduce the impact of conflict were highly effective steps that could be taken to avert and reduce acute food insecurity. In that sense, prevention was needed as conflicts, extreme weather, desert locusts, economic shocks and the COVID-19 were likely to push additional millions into acute food insecurity in 2020. By closely monitoring the evolution of those shocks, FAO could rapidly intervene to mitigate their impact. In that regard, he expressed FAO's commitment to rising to that challenge and concluded by stating that it would continue supporting the Security Council by providing professional

[753] For further details on the procedure and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[754] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 16.
[755] The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 14 April 2020 (S/2020/299).

consultation with up-to-date information and analysis on food security in conflict contexts, which would facilitate the Council's timely action to avert food crises.[756] The WFP Executive Director said that the world was not only facing a global health pandemic but also a global humanitarian catastrophe. With millions of civilians living in conflict-scarred nations and being pushed to the brink of starvation, the spectre of famine was "a very real and dangerous possibility". While commending the Council for its historic decision to adopt resolution 2417 (2018), he emphasized the need to live up to the pledge to protect the most vulnerable and act immediately to save lives. In that regard, it was critical that the global community came together to defeat the coronavirus disease and protect the most vulnerable nations and communities from its potentially devastating effects. Accounting for the role of WFP as the logistical backbone for the humanitarian world and for the global effort to beat the pandemic, he urged the Council to lead the way, underscoring the importance of a global ceasefire, as called for by the Secretary-General, the swift and unimpeded humanitarian access to all vulnerable communities, and coordinated action to support life-saving humanitarian assistance. The Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council focused his remarks on the need for help from the Council with field-based obstacles to reach civilians in need of assistance in conflict situations. In that regard, he highlighted five areas requiring particular action from the Council, namely, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to all populations in need; stronger humanitarian diplomacy to promote humanitarian access; strengthening the instrument of deconfliction with parties to armed conflicts; standard exemptions for humanitarian aid, including food and agricultural products, included in counter-terrorism laws and sanctions regimes; and strengthening of monitoring, reporting and accountability mechanisms.

During the discussion, Council members expressed their appreciation to the Dominican Republic for its leadership on the issue of conflict-induced hunger.[757] Delegations recalled that resolution 2417 (2018), which had been adopted unanimously, had acknowledged the link between food insecurity and armed conflict, with most Council members underscoring that such

[756] See S/2020/340.
[757] The Dominican Republic was represented by its Minister of Foreign Affairs.

linkage had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.[758] A number of delegations also emphasized the connection between famine and climate change.[759] In that context, the French delegation regretted that climate change could not be explicitly mentioned in the draft presidential statement that was being negotiated.

Several speakers stressed the need for comprehensive implementation of resolution 2417 (2018).[760] In that regard, a number of delegations underscored the importance of early action, and, in particular the role of the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Council with timely information about conflict-related famine and food insecurity in countries with armed conflict.[761] The representative of Viet Nam stated in that sense that approximately two thirds of the worst food-security crises were in countries that were experiencing armed conflict and were on the agenda of the Council. In addition, a number of delegations condemned the use of starvation as a method of warfare.[762] In that regard, the representative of Belgium welcomed the amendment of the Rome Statute to include as a war crime the intentional starvation of civilians as a method of warfare. Many delegations expressed support for the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire to facilitate humanitarian aid to affected populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.[763] The representative of Germany underlined the importance that resolution 2417 (2018) attached to adherence to international humanitarian law and to sustaining humanitarian access, and called on all relevant actors to provide safe, rapid and unimpeded access to all people in need.

On 29 April 2020, the Council issued a presidential statement recalling the link between armed conflict, violence and conflict-induced food insecurity and the threat of famine. It called on all parties to armed conflict to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law regarding respecting and protecting civilians and humanitarian personnel, and underlined the importance of safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed

[758] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Viet Nam.
[759] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, and Tunisia.
[760] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Belgium, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Tunisia, and Viet Nam.
[761] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Belgium, France, Germany, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Viet Nam.
[762] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Tunisia, United States, and Viet Nam.
[763] Ibid., Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Indonesia, and Viet Nam.

conflicts.[764] The Council noted with deep concern that over the last two years, armed conflicts continued to be one of the major factors causing or aggravating food insecurity and undernutrition in different areas all over the globe with an increased number of people requiring urgent food aid, nutrition and livelihood assistance.[765] As set out in resolution 2417 (2018), the Council strongly condemned the use of starvation of civilians as a method of warfare, and the unlawful denial of access to humanitarian assistance and humanitarian personnel to the civilian population in armed conflict and called upon all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and take all feasible steps to protect civilians and civilian objects.[766] In addition, the Council encouraged Member States to support relevant early warning systems to provide governments and humanitarian actors with timely, reliable, accurate and verifiable information regarding food security and allowing for anticipation and early action to prevent and mitigate the effects of a food crisis in the context of armed conflicts.[767] Lastly, the Council encouraged the Secretary-General to include in his reporting on country-specific situations analysis including information when the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity in armed conflict occurred, and expressed its intention to continue to give such information its due attention, including relevant recommendations to avert such risks.[768]

On 27 May 2020, at the initiative of Estonia which held the Presidency for the month, Council members held a high-level open videoconference in order to consider the annual report of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict in the context of new challenges and developments, among them the COVID-19 pandemic.[769] At the outset, the Secretary-General stated that those already weakened by years of armed conflict were particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic. With access to services and safety curtailed, and as some leaders exploited the pandemic to adopt repressive measures, it had become even

[764] S/PRST/2020/6, fourth paragraph.
[765] Ibid., fifth paragraph.
[766] Ibid., tenth paragraph.
[767] Ibid., fifteenth paragraph.
[768] Ibid., sixteenth paragraphs.
[769] The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 14 May 2020 (S/2020/402). See also S/2020/366.

more difficult to protect the most vulnerable. This was particularly true in conflict zones, where civilians were already exposed to significant risks, posing a major threat to refugees and internally displaced people. The Secretary-General added that his call for a global ceasefire would create conditions for a stronger response to the pandemic and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the most vulnerable people. He regretted, however, that the expressions of support had not been translated into concrete action and cautioned that the pandemic might create incentives for warring parties to press their advantage, or to strike hard while international attention was focused elsewhere. In addition, he noted that United Nations peacekeeping operations were one of the most effective means of protecting civilians in conflict zones, and that the Blue Helmets were supporting national authorities in their response to the pandemic by protecting health-care and humanitarian workers as well as facilitating access to aid and protection. Affirming that it was only through respect for human rights and international humanitarian law and refugee law that it was possible to protect civilians, the Secretary-General averred, however, that prospects were bleak and that his latest report had showed little progress on the protection of civilians and on compliance with international law in 2019. After highlighting the main issues faced by civilians in armed conflict, including the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons in populated areas, the appalling levels of sexual and gender-based violence to which women and girls were subjected, and the violence against humanitarian and health-care workers, he urged all to move beyond rhetoric and close the accountability gap through national legislation and coordinated international action. Lastly, the Secretary-General outlined four actions that required global attention, namely, an urgent review of States' approach to urban warfare; the use of armed drones to conduct attacks; the implications posed by the development of lethal autonomous weapons systems; and the malicious use of digital technology to conduct cyberattacks on critical civilian infrastructure, as reports from several countries indicated a rise in cyberattacks on health-care facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.[770]

In the videoconference, Council members also heard briefings by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and by the Nobel Laureate and former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The President of the ICRC underscored that the

[770] See S/2020/465.

Secretary-General's report had highlighted the enormous violations and the failures to protect men, women and children around the globe. He expressed concern in relation to several issues, including the rising number of displaced people as well as the survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and people with a disability, the rapid spread of hate speech, the shrinking space for neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian work, and the persistent disregard of international humanitarian law and other international legal frameworks. More specifically, he underscored the devastating impact on civilians when explosive weapons were used in populated areas, which raised serious questions about international humanitarian law compliance and signalled the urgent need for a change of behaviour to protect civilians. In that context, he asserted that the divisions within the Council on critical concepts of humanitarian law and work were increasing suffering on the front lines. While the ICRC took responsibility for delivering neutral and impartial humanitarian services independently and within the legal framework of the Geneva Conventions, it was the Council's responsibility to facilitate access to populations in need. He urged Council members to base their protection policies on international humanitarian laws, principles and concepts, which was the only reasonable basis for consensus, and to leave political controversies outside of humanitarian concerns. He added that the COVID-19 crisis was fast threatening to become a protection crisis, and feared that some groups might be excluded from life-saving measures. He also acknowledged that States had stepped up in response to the pandemic, implementing more humane policies, including the safe release from detention of many people deprived of liberty, decisions to regularize non-documented migrants to ensure they could access health care, as well as the adoption of unilateral ceasefires. At the outset, the former President of Liberia recalled the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) as milestones that could pave the way for increased women's leadership and strengthening efforts to protect traditionally marginalized and vulnerable groups trapped by conflict. She regretted that due to the protracted nature of some conflicts, many lives had often been defined, shortened and narrowed by conflicts they had no part in creating. In that connection, she called for bold action to end that cycle of immeasurable loss and human tragedy, echoing the Secretary-General's report that the most effective way to

protect civilians was "to prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of armed conflict."[771]

During the discussion following the briefings, Council members acknowledged the bleak situation regarding the protection of civilians in conflict zones around the world, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, despite the existing legal framework and efforts by the Council throughout the years.[772] Members also recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic had exacerbated the vulnerability of the civilian populations in conflict zones and reiterated their support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to allow an adequate response to the pandemic. In that regard, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia stated that the Council had a moral obligation to support that call and looked forward to the unanimous adoption of the draft resolution presented by Tunisia and France in that regard.[773] In their statements, Council members focused on the need for compliance with international humanitarian law as well as for accountability for violations against civilians as the most pressing challenges to strengthening the protection of civilians in conflict zones. In that regard, the President of Estonia noted that the Council had a number of tools at its disposal to enhance compliance with international law and ensure accountability, including investigative and judicial mechanisms, peacekeeping-mission mandates and targeted sanctions. She added that those tools needed to be applied consistently across all conflict situations.

Representatives of non-Council Member States also expressed support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire, agreeing that the COVID-19 pandemic had further aggravated the protection of already vulnerable populations in areas of armed conflict. Various non-Council members also acknowledged the existing implementation gap between the normative framework and compliance and accountability with regard to the protection of civilians in armed conflict.[774] In that connection, most delegations condemned the indiscriminate

[771] Ibid. See also S/2020/366.
[772] Estonia was represented by its President; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Regional Integration; Indonesia and Tunisia were represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; and the United Kingdom was represented by its Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Minister of State for the Commonwealth and the United Nations.
[773] See S/2020/465.
[774] Ibid., Angola, Argentina, Bangladesh, Ecuador, Republic of Korea, Romania, and United Arab Emirates.

use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas, the persistent conflict-related sexual violence endured in particular by women and girls, as well as attacks on humanitarian and medical personnel and facilities. Numerous delegations underlined, in that context, the importance of ensuring that United Nations peacekeepers had the capabilities and resources in order to fulfil their protection of civilians mandates.[775] Several delegations further emphasized the need to increase the participation of women in peacekeeping.[776]

On 17 September 2020, the Council held an open videoconference on the issue of conflict-induced hunger, in which it heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, in response to its request - contained in resolution 2417 (2018) - to be swiftly informed of "the risk of conflict-induced famine and widespread food insecurity".[777] Stressing the importance of resolution 2417 (2018) and the clear links between armed conflict, food insecurity and the threat of famine, the Under-Secretary-General focused his briefing on the situations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, northeast Nigeria and the Sahel as some of the main areas of concern, where millions were experiencing growing situations of food-insecurity and famine. In that regard, he stated that international humanitarian law was an important line of defence against food insecurity in conflict, urging parties to allow and facilitate humanitarian access and protect aid workers and assets. He outlined four concrete measures that the Council and Member States could take, namely, pressing for peaceful and negotiated political solutions to bring armed conflicts to an end; ensuring that the parties to conflict respect international humanitarian law; mitigating the economic impact of armed conflict and related violence; and scaling up support for humanitarian operations and taking bigger and more ambitious steps to support the economies of countries facing severe, large-scale hunger.[778] At the same occasion, the Council was also briefed by the Director-General of FAO and by the Executive Director of WFP. The Director-General of FAO

[775] Ibid., Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Ethiopia, Fiji, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Morocco, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Switzerland (on behalf of the Group of Friends on the protection of civilians in armed conflict), Thailand, and Uruguay.
[776] Ibid., Canada, El Salvador, Ethiopia, India, Ireland, Philippines, Rwanda, Switzerland (on behalf of the Group of Friends on the protection of civilians in armed conflict), and Uruguay.
[777] Resolution 2417 (2018), para. 12.
[778] See S/2020/930.

focused his remarks on the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic was having on the aggravation of conflict-induced food insecurity and the risk of famine in several conflict areas in the world, including in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, northern Nigeria, Somalia and the Sudan. In that regard, he expressed his firm belief that the Council could play a pivotal role in addressing the threat of conflict-induced acute food insecurity at crisis or worse levels by advancing dialogue between parties to find political solutions and innovative approaches to end conflict and violence, thus allowing tFAO to scale up urgent life- and livelihood-saving operations and to deliver better-integrated humanitarian and development responses that addressed the multiple drivers of acute food insecurity. Recalling that resolution 2417 (2018) called for effective early-warning systems, the Executive Director of WFP warned that the global hunger crisis caused by conflict, and compounded by COVID-19, was moving into a new and dangerous phase, especially in nations already scarred by violence. He also highlighted situations in several conflict zones of the world, including Yemen and South Sudan, and stated that the world needed political leadership to build peace and avert that hunger crisis.

During the subsequent discussion, Council members continued to underscore the link between food insecurity and conflict in many situations on the agenda of the Council, sharing strong concerns particularly with the rising risk of famine and acute food insecurity in Yemen, north-eastern Nigeria, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The representative of the Russian Federation argued however that armed conflicts were not the only reason for the increase in the number of food-insecure people in the world and suggested that instead of focusing in the Council on the exclusive link between conflicts and hunger, other factors of food insecurity had to be considered. Those included economic stagnation and investment deficits, environmental degradation, and most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic. In that sense, he argued that unilateral economic measures, which undermined the countries' rights and capacities for development also had a place in the list, a view that was echoed by the South African delegation. The representative of the Russian Federation further added that food-security issues should be taken up in the Council only in the context of examining the situations of specific countries that posed a threat to international peace and security.

Council members continued to emphasize the need for international humanitarian law to be respected by all parties to conflict, with several delegations stressing that hunger should never serve as a weapon of war.[779] Several speakers called once again for a global ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need.[780]

Throughout 2020, the Council continued the practice of hearing briefings by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs concerning the protection of civilians in armed conflict under country- and region-specific items.[781] The Council also included protection-related provisions in most of its decisions in relation to both country- or region-specific as well as thematic items during 2020. The Council focused on multiple aspects and used a variety of language formulations to address the protection of civilians in its decisions; selected provisions of those decisions are listed in table 2. In particular, the Council (a) condemned all forms of attacks against civilians and civilian objects, especially against women and children, including attacks against schools, hospitals and medical facilities; (b) demanded that all parties to armed conflict ensure unhindered access for delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need, and ensure safety of humanitarian and medical personnel; (c) called upon all relevant parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law and called for accountability measures against perpetrators of such crimes; (d) emphasised the primary responsibility of States to comply with their relevant obligations to protect civilians; (e) requested additional monitoring mechanisms as well as reporting arrangements in order to improve the protection of civilians in armed conflict, and (f) adopted or expressed its intention to adopt targeted sanction measures against perpetrators. In addition, the Council practice of strengthening the mandates of United Nations peace operations with a view to protecting civilians continued to evolve. During the reporting period, the Council continued to request several missions to take the protection of civilians under threat of physical violence as specific priorities and benchmarks of their mandates, with particular attention, but

[779] Ibid., France, Indonesia, South Africa; United Kingdom and United States.
[780] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Indonesia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[781] In 2020, the Council heard briefings by OCHA 26 times at either public meetings or open videoconferences and 21 times in either closed meetings or informal consultations, for a total of 47 briefings. For more information on briefings on those items prior to 2020, see Repertoire, Supplement 2019, part I, sect. 29.

not limited to women, children and internally displaced persons, including by creating a secure environment for the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, in particular in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as strengthening local community engagement and empowerment, early warning and information-sharing mechanisms.

Table 1
Videoconferences: Protection of civilians in armed conflict

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
21 April 2020	S/2020/340	Letter dated 23 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 April 2020	No record (see A/75/2, part I, IV.B)	Letter dated 23 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	S/PRST/2020/6
27 May 2020	S/2020/465	Letter dated 29 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
17 September 2020	S/2020/930	Letter dated 21 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Table 2
Selection of provisions relevant to the protection of civilians in armed conflict, by theme and agenda item

Agenda item	*Decision*	*Paragraph*
Condemnation of, and demands for cessation of, attacks and acts of violence against civilian and civilian objects and abuses and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law		

Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	3, 23
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	9, 12
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	35
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	27, 28
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	25
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Fifth, seventh

Calls for humanitarian access and safety of humanitarian and medical personnel and facilities

Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	49, 50
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	35
	The situation Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	52
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2504 (2020)	1, 4
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2521 (2020)	2
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	8, 22
	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2020/7	Eighth
Thematic	Maintenance of international peace and security	Resolution 2532 (2020)	2, 6

Calls for compliance with and accountability under applicable international humanitarian law human rights law and relevant Security Council resolutions by all parties

Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	20
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	6
	The situation Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	51
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2504 (2020)	2
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	35, 38
Thematic	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/6	Tenth

Affirmation of primary responsibility of States and parties to the conflict to protect civilians

Country and region-specific	The situation Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	53
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Third
	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/6	Seventh

Requests for specific monitoring and analysis of and reporting on protection of civilians

Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	32(d)(i), 54
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	29 (ii)(e)
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2504 (2020)	6, 7, 8
		Resolution 2533 (2020)	3
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2550 (2020)	26, 33
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Twelfth
Imposition of targeted measures against perpetrators of violations against civilians in armed conflict			
Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	5, 20
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	5, 13
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2511 (2020)	2
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2521 (2020)	15(c), (d), (g) and (h), 24
Inclusion of mission-specific protection mandates and benchmarks[a]			
Country and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	31(a)(i), 31(a)(ii), 32(d)(iii), 32(e)(vii) 40
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	29 (i)(c), 29 (i)(d), 29 (i)(f), 29(ii)(g)
	The situation Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	28(b)(iii), 28(c)(i), 28(e)(i), 28(e)(ii)
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2539 (2020)	21
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	8(a)(i)(iv), (vii), (viii), 8(b)(i), 8(d)(i), 8(d)(iv), 10(a)(iii), 14
		Resolution 2521 (2020)	22
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	2(iii)(d),
		Resolution 2525 (2020)	4, 8
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Sixteenth

[a] For additional information on mandates and decisions relevant to peacekeeping and political missions, see part X.

27. Small arms

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled "Small arms" which took the form of a briefing.[782] The last time that the Council considered this item prior to this meeting was on 18 December 2017.[783] More information on the meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.[784]

On 5 February 2020, further to the biennial report of the Secretary-General,[785] the Council held a meeting on the item, and was briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the Deputy Director of Operations, Conflict Armament Research.[786] In her briefing, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs addressed "two themes of high relevance to the work of the Council", notably, the role of illicit small arms, light weapons and their ammunition in conflict and pervasive crime and the deeply crosscutting and wide-ranging impact of illicit small arms and light weapons flows. She noted that those two fundamental themes had been consistently raised throughout the biennial reports of the Secretary-General, as well as in the context of the two thematic resolutions adopted on small arms and light weapons, namely, resolutions 2117 (2013) and 2220 (2015). She stated that with an estimated one billion small arms in circulation worldwide, the use of these weapons in lethal violence, whether in conflict or non-conflict settings, was prevalent across regions and subregions from the Americas to Africa to southern Europe and that no State was immune from the challenges posed by illicit arms flows. Additionally, she provided an overview of significant trends and developments over the previous two years and expressed her concerns regarding the continued rise in global military expenditure and the role that small arms and light weapons continued to play in hindering peace, security and sustainable development. She further emphasized that the gender dimension had not been sufficiently integrated into policies regulating small arms and light weapons, while

[782] For further information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[783] See S/PV.8140. For more information, see Repertoire, Supplement 2016-2017, part I, sect. 31.
[784] See also A/75/2, part II, chap. 17.
[785] S/2019/1011. For further information on the biennial report of the Secretary-General requested by presidential statement S/PRST/2007/24, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2004-2007*, chap. 8, sect. 40.
[786] See S/PV.8713.

stressing the need for mainstreaming small arms and light weapons consideration across the work of the Council.

The Deputy Director of Operations, Conflict Armament Research (CAR) recounted that since the early 1990s the international community had sought to control the conventional arms trade to minimize weapons diversion and explained that the lack of detailed reporting had consistently hampered those efforts. He highlighted the work of his organizationin this regard. He also described the work of his organization in support of United Nations sanctions monitoring groups and panels of experts, as well as embargo and sanctions enforcement, and expressed the hope that his briefing had demonstrated the importance of an evidence-based approach to tackle the illicit proliferation of weapons.

Following the briefings, Council members welcomed the report of the Secretary-General and its recommendations. However, the representative of the Russian Federation questioned references to the Arms Trade Treaty, citing that the instrument was far from universal and did not fully allow for the implementation of its own provisions. In addition, the representative of the United States raised concerns with regard to civilian ownership of firearms as reflected in the report. The representatives of the Dominican Republic and Estonia called for the promotion of gender equality and the meaningful participation of women in combating the illicit arms trade.

Many Council members emphasized that the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons posed a serious threat to international peace and security. In that regard, they pointed out that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons had contributed to terrorism and transnational organized crime, and called for a comprehensive approach in addressing the fight against illicit trafficking. Many speakers drew attention to the implementation of several crucial international mechanisms intended to combat the illicit trade, such as the Arms Trade Treaty, the International Tracing Instrument, the Firearms Protocol, the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the 2020 Group of Governmental Experts on problems arising from the accumulation of conventional ammunition stockpiles in surplus.

Most Council members commended the efforts of regional organizations, such as the African Union’s Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative, in dealing with the challenges of illicit

small arms and light weapons and called for strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations. In that connection, the representative of Indonesia emphasized the important role of other regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the implementation of the Programme of Action to address arms smuggling and related issues.

Meetings: Small Arms

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8713 5 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons (S/2019/1011)			High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Deputy Director of Operations, Conflict Armament Research	All Council members, all invitees	

28. Women and peace and security

In 2020, the Security Council did not hold any public meeting in relation to the item entitled "Women and peace and security". However, Council members held two open videoconferences in connection with this item.[787] More information on the videoconferences is given in table 1 below.

On 17 July 2020, at the initiative of Germany which held the Presidency for the month,[788] the Council held a high-level open videoconference on the theme "Conflict-related sexual violence: turning commitments into compliance".[789] At the open videoconference, the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Founder and Chair of Progressive Voice, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, and the Executive President of the Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique. In her briefing to the Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict noted that the report of the Secretary-General featured, for the first time, an assessment of compliance gaps which found prevailing disregard for international norms and obligations by parties to armed conflict as well as a lack of meaningful commitments to curbing violations by the majority of persistent perpetrators. In this connection, she raised the urgent need for greater coherence between the practice of listing and the practice of imposing targeted and graduated measures to leverage behavioural change.[790] Noting that 2020 began with the anticipation of a "jubilee year" for the women and peace and security agenda, but had become a fight to prevent the rollback on women's rights, evident in reprisals against women's human rights defenders, physical and financial risks to women's civil society organizations and shrinking civic space. The Special Representative mentioned that the coronavirus disease

[787] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[788] See S/2020/727. A concept note was circulated by letter dated 8 July 2020 (S/2020/665).
[789] Belgium was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, Germany was represented by its Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, South Africa was represented by its Minister for International Relations and Cooperation, and Niger was represented by its Minister for the Advancement of Women and Child Protection.
[790] See S/2020/727. See also S/2020/487.

pandemic had dramatically affected the work of the United Nations, including her mandate but that the virus had not changed the needs of survivors and the right to physical integrity and bodily autonomy. In this regard, she said that it was time to silence the guns and to amplify and unmute the voices of women and clarified that the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire meant that all parties had to cease the use of sexual and other violence. The Special Envoy of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees also urged the Council to move beyond rhetoric and implement decisions and called on the Council to hold perpetrators to account, address the root, structural causes of gender-based violence and discrimination, and urgently funding for programmes that address the needs of all survivors.[791] The Founder and Chair of Progressive Voice, on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security focused her briefing on the situation in Myanmar, while the Executive President of the Association des Femmes Juristes de Centrafrique focused on the Central African Republic. Both of them called on the Council to support the action of local civil-society organizations as well as actions to bring perpetrators of conflict-related sexual violence to justice.

Council members and other Member States addressed a variety of issues, including the importance of a survivor-centred approach, the need for converting commitments into compliance by strengthening the full and effective implementation of all Security Council decisions and the prevention of conflict-related sexual violence. Many Member States also stressed the importance of the meaningful participation of women at all levels of the decision-making process, including peacekeeping missions and peacebuilding, in order to address the issue of sexual violence. Participants expressed concern over the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) on the violence against women and girls in conflict and humanitarian settings, and reiterated the Secretary-General's call to address gender-based violence as an

[791] See S/2020/727.

integral part of COVID-19 responses.[792] In their statements, some participants explicitly referred to conflict-related sexual violence as a threat to international peace and security.[793]

On 29 October 2020, at the initiative of the Russian Federation which held the Presidency for the month, and on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), the Council held a high-level open videoconference under this item and entitled "Women and peace and security: twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) – focusing on better implementation".[794] At the videoconference, Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, the UN Women Goodwill Ambassador, the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Adviser for the United Nations Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and a representative of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation.[795] The Secretary-General stated that 20 years since the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), despite some progress, power structures remained dominated by men with women leading only 7 per cent of countries, men making up three quarters of the members of COVID-19 task forces, and men still overwhelmingly making decisions about international peace and security. He emphasized that ensuring women's full participation in peace processes required stronger partnerships among the United Nations, regional organizations, Member States and civil society and full use of tools and innovative solutions to have a rapid and decisive impact on women's representation. He reported that at the beginning of 2020, the United Nations leadership achieved gender parity, including Resident Coordinators in countries affected by conflict and reaffirmed his determination to push for parity at all levels including field missions and special political missions.[796] The Executive Director of UN Women in her statement addressed women's meaningful participation in peacemaking, peacebuilding and peacekeeping and the use of violence against women in

[792] Ibid., Germany, South Africa, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Canada, on behalf of 62 Member States and the European Union, Denmark, European External Action Service of the European Union, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mexico, Myanmar, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, and Uruguay.
[793] Ibid., South Africa, Georgia, Iraq), Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security of the Secretary-General of NATO, Peru and Slovenia. For information on threats to international peace and security considered by the Council in 2020, see part VII, sect. I.
[794] See S/2020/1084, the United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa and Germany was represented by its Minister of State in the Federal Foreign Office. A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 14 October 2020 (S/2020/1014).
[795] See S/2020/1014.
[796] See S/2020/1084, pp. 2-4. See also S/2020/946.

conflict. The UN Women Goodwill Ambassador highlighted the importance of providing more support to women's organizations. The Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Adviser for the United Nations Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) focused on the participation of women in peacekeeping. The representative of the Women and Children Legal Research Foundation briefed on the importance of ensuring women's progress in Afghanistan and protecting the safety of women's rights defenders.[797]

Participants at the videoconference celebrated the 20th anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000) as an important framework for the women and peace and security agenda, along with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and echoed the pledge to amplify the voices of women. In their statements, participants also underlined the implementation gaps of resolution 1325 (2000) and pointed out the widespread underrepresentation of women in peace and security decision-making and processes and the need for the global community to live up to its commitment by supporting the work of women peacebuilders and decision-makers.[798] Speakers echoed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, recognizing the added challenges and impact of the pandemic on the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). Some participants acknowledged the need to bridge the commitments with resources and called for more sustainable and robust funding for women's organizations aimed at supporting civil society and women peacebuilders and protecting female human rights' defenders.[799] Participants also emphasized the importance of following the recommendations of the Informal Expert Group on Women, Peace and Security to better monitor and coordinate implementation.[800]

During the period under review and following the open videoconference of 29 October 2020, the Council voted on a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation.[801] The draft resolution failed to obtain the required number of votes with 5 votes in favour, none against and

[797] See SC/14341.
[798] See S/2020/1084, United Kingdom, Belgium, Niger, South Africa, Canada, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Iraq, Ireland, Netherlands, and Thailand.
[799] Ibid., Germany, Belgium, Estonia, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Canada, on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, El Salvador, European Union, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Mexico, Sierra Leone, and United Arab Emirates.
[800] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, Ireland and p. Mexico.
[801] See S/2020/1054.

10 abstentions.[802] Consistent with the procedure agreed to in light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the letter by the President of the Security Council dated 30 October 2020 included the Council members explanations of their votes.[803] In explaining their abstention, several Council members explained that the text did not address key aspects of the normative framework of the women and peace and security agenda on the meaningful participation of women in peace processes, civil society involvement as well as the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).[804] Specifically, the representative of Belgium noted that the draft resolution inadequately reflected the normative framework and was nearly devoid of meaningful language on the implementation of or on accountability for the women and peace and security agenda. The representative of the Dominican Republic submitted that the adoption of the draft resolution would have compromised progress made over the past 20 years. The representative of Estonia highlighted that given the serious threats and reprisals against women human rights defenders, this was a stark omission of the role of the key partners in the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000). The representative of Germany pointed out that had the draft resolution been adopted, it would have eroded the hard-won gains of the women and peace and security agenda and watered down previous achievements on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). The representative of the United States noted that the draft resolution had diluted the long-standing United Nations commitments to women and weakened the consensus about the role of women in conflict situations. By contrast, those who voted in favour of the draft resolution considered that the text reaffirmed the commitment of the Security Council on the women and peace and security agenda and supported it to mark the anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000). The representative of China emphasized that the Council members should remain open-minded and be inclusive to new perspectives and elements and avoid "clinging only to existing language and refusing improvement". The representative of

[802] See S/2020/1066. *In favour*: China, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam; *against*: none; *abstaining*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States. The vote on the draft resolution was conducted in accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council of 27 March 2020 (S/2020/253). For further information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[803] S/2020/1076.
[804] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia), France, Germany, United Kingdom, and United States.

Indonesia submitted that the draft resolution had a distinct potential to advance the women and peace and security agenda constructively. The representative of South Africa clarified that while the draft resolution did not adequately address emerging issues that impacted the women and peace and security agenda, the draft reaffirmed, and did not negate, all previous resolutions, particularly resolution 2493 (2019), adopted unanimously by the Council a year ago.

During the period under review, the Informal Experts Group on Women and Peace and Security continued to convene in accordance with resolution 2242 (2015),[805] including to address the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.[806]

The Council referred to women and peace and security related issues under multiple items on its agenda in 2020. As summarised in table 2 below, the Council addressed in its decisions a wide variety of measures in connection with the women and peace and security agenda and in particular relating to, (i) the representation and participation of women in public affairs and governance as well as in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution; (ii) the participation of women in peacekeeping operations,[807] including through the appointment of women's protection and gender advisers; (iii) the development and inclusion of gender mainstreaming and gender sensitivity by Member States and UN entities; and (iv) combatting sexual violence including through the monitoring, analysing and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence as well as the prosecution of perpetrators of sexual violence. The Council continued to call on Member States to adopt a survivor-centred approach in preventing and responding to sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations. In addition, during the period under review, the Council placed an emphasis on the socio-economic environment for the meaningful participation and empowerment of women in the context of very diverse conflict-specific items. Consistent with previous years, the Council included provisions in a few of its decisions focusing on the role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism.

Table 1

[805] See resolution 2242 (2015), para. 5(a).
[806] See S/2020/282, S/2020/283, S/2020/439, S/2020/899, S/2020/1297, and S/2020/1319.
[807] In 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2538 (2020), which specifically focused on the participation of women in peacekeeping operations. For further information, see sect. 23.

Videoconferences: Women and peace and security

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
17 July 2020	S/2020/727	Letter dated 21 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 October 2020	S/2020/1084	Letter dated 31 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
30 October 2020	S/2020/1066		S/2020/1054 (Draft resolution) 5-0-10[a] S/2020/1076 (Record of written procedure)

[a] *For*: China, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam. *against*: None. *abstaining*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, and United States.

Table 2
Selection of provisions relevant to women and peace and security, by theme and agenda item

	Agenda item	*Decision*	*Paragraph*
Representation and participation of women in political processes at all levels, including decision-making			
Country- and region-specific	Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2020/5	Twelfth
	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2020/7	Fourteenth, Seventeenth
	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2513 (2020)	3
		Resolution 2543 (2020)	6(f)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	7, 9, 54
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	32
	The situation in Guinea Bissau	Resolution 2512 (2020)	5(d), 10
	The situation in Iraq	Resolution 2522 (2020)	2(e)
	The situation in Libya	Resolution 2542 (2020)	8

	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	4, 28(a)
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2539 (2020)	26
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	31
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	31
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	8
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	27
Participation of women in peacebuilding and in conflict prevention and resolution			
Country- and region-specific	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2020/7	Twelfth
	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2513 (2020)	4
		Resolution 2543 (2020)	6(f)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	7, 31(b)(iii), 31(b)(iv), 44
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	20, 29(ii)(c), 32
	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2506 (2020)	5(f)
		Resolution 2537 (2020)	5(g)
	The situation in Guinea-Bissau	Resolution 2512 (2020)	5(d), 18
	The situation in Libya	Resolution 2542 (2020)	8
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	3, 54
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	31
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	5
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	2(ii)(a), 8
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	17, 18
Thematic	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	S/PRST/2020/11	Sixteenth
	Maintenance of international peace and security	Resolution 2553 (2020)	14, 24
Socio-economic environment for the meaningful participation and empowerment of women / funding of national programmes			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2543 (2020)	6(f)
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	32
	The situation in Guinea-Bissau	Resolution 2512 (2020)	18

	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2524 (2020)	8
Conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence			
Country- and region-specific	Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2020/5	Thirteenth
	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2020/7	Eighth
	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2543 (2020)	6(f)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	23, 24, 31(a)(iii), 31(b)(iii), 31(b)(iv), 31(b)(v), 32(d)(ii), 32(e)(vii), 44 24
	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2537 (2020)	17
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 29(i)(c), 29(i)(h), 29(ii)(g), 29(ii)(k), 32, 33, 34, 54(c)
	The situation in Guinea-Bissau	Resolution 2512 (2020)	22
	The situation in Libya	Resolution 2542 (2020)	1(ix), 8
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	8, 28(c)(iii), 28(e)(ii), 51, 55, 56, 57
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2511 (2020)	6
		Resolution 2530 (2020)	14
		Resolution 2539 (2020)	24, 26
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	19, 32, 33
		Resolution 2551 (2020)	4, 20, 21
		Resolution 2554 (2020)	20
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	5, 8(a)(v), 8(a)(vi), 8(a)(vii), 8(d)(ii), 18, 19, 22, 28, 32, 35
		Resolution 2521 (2020)	15(e), 21
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	2(ii)(b), 2(iii)(d), 10
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	26
Thematic	Children and armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/8	Fifth, ninth, tenth
	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	S/PRST/2020/11	Thirteenth, Eighteenth

	Maintenance of international peace and security	Resolution 2553 (2020)	24
	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Resolution 2538 (2020)	7

Gender mainstreaming, gender expertise and gender-sensitive responses

Country- and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	32(c)(ii), 44
	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2537 (2020)	15
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	17, 29(ii)(c), 55
	The situation in Guinea-Bissau	Resolution 2512 (2020)	5(d), 18
	The situation in Iraq	Resolution 2522 (2020)	2(e)
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	19, 20
		Resolution 2551 (2020)	30
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	18
		Resolution 2521 (2020)	19
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	8
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	27
Thematic	Maintenance of international peace and security	Resolution 2532 (2020)	7
		Resolution 2553 (2020)	5, 20(b)
	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Resolution 2518 (2020)	6

Women's Protection and Women's Protection Advisers

Country- and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	31(a)(iii)
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	32, 33
	The situation in Libya	Resolution 2542 (2020)	1(ix)
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	28(c)(iii), 54
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	17
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	8(a)(i), 8(a)(vi)
		Resolution 2524 (2020)	2(iii)(c), 2(iii)(d), 8
		Resolution 2550 (2020)	27
Thematic	Protection of civilians in armed conflict	S/PRST/2020/6	Eighth
	Maintenance of international peace and security	Resolution 2553 (2020)	24

Participation of women in peacekeeping operations

Country- and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	39
	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2506 (2020)	14
		Resolution 2537 (2020)	15
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	43
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	45
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2530 (2020)	13
		Resolution 2539 (2020)	25
		Resolution 2555 (2020)	13
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2520 (2020)	20
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2514 (2020)	21
		Resolution 2525 (2020)	9
	The situation concerning Western Sahara	Resolution 2548 (2020)	11
Thematic	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	S/PRST/2020/11	Thirteenth, fourteenth
	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Resolution 2518 (2020)	6
		Resolution 2538 (2020)	1, 2, 2(b), 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
Role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism			
Country- and region-specific	Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2020/5	Twelfth
	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2020/7	Twelfth
Participation of women in the security sector and in security sector reform (SSR)			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2552 (2020)	44
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2556 (2020)	20, 32
	The situation in Guinea-Bissau	Resolution 2512 (2020)	10
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2531 (2020)	28(a)(iii), 54
Thematic	Maintenance of international peace and security	Resolution 2553 (2020)	5, 14, 20(b), 23, 24

29. Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting under the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts" which took the form of a briefing.[808] More information on the meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. Council members also held five open videoconferences in connection with this item and the Council adopted two resolutions, including one under Chapter VII of the Charter.[809] More information on videoconferences is given in table 2 below. In addition, the Council failed to adopt a draft resolution in connection with this item because of the negative vote of a permanent member.

Whether in the context of meetings or videoconferences, Council members continued to focus on several issues under this item, including the threat posed by returning and relocating fighters, the countering of terrorism financing, the introduction of a gender perspective in counter-terrorism efforts as well as the linkages between terrorism and organized crime and the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh). During 2020, Council members also addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on various aspects of terrorism. Council members heard most briefings by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. In addition, Council members were briefed twice by the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, once by a civil society representative and once by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

The Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism briefed Council members three times, on 7 February and on 6 and 24 August 2020. Two of those briefings concerned the tenth and eleventh reports of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in

[808] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.
[809] Resolutions 2557 (2020) and 2560 (2020). For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

support of Member States in countering the threat.[810] During his first briefing, on 7 February 2020, the Under-Secretary-General reported that ISIL (Da'esh) had lost its last stronghold in the Syrian Arab Republic in March 2019 and had seen a change in leadership after the death of Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi in October 2019, although the Secretary-General's report showed that the group remained at the centre of the transnational terrorism threat. He noted that ISIL (Da'esh) had continued to seek resurgence and global relevance online and offline and its regional affiliates had continued to pursue a strategy of entrenchment in conflict zones by exploiting local grievances. The Under-Secretary-General further stated that due to their high number, foreign terrorist fighters who had travelled to Iraq and Syria were expected to continue to pose a threat, with estimates of those alive ranging from 20,000 to almost 27,000. He noted that the situation of ISIL (Da'esh) fighters and associated family members in detention and displacement facilities in Iraq and Syria had worsened since his last presentation to the Council, adding that their fate remained a major challenge to the international community. In closing, he urged the Council and Member States to maintain and reaffirm their unity in the face of the persisting threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida and their affiliates, as well as terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.[811]

In her briefing at the same meeting, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate highlighted that thousands of women and children associated with ISIL (Da'esh) remained in makeshift camps in appalling conditions. She noted that leaving them to fight for survival, facing threats of further radicalization, would not only be contrary to principles of humanity but also detrimental to counter-terrorism efforts. She added that women associated with ISIL (Da'esh) often had simultaneous roles as victims and perpetrators and required gender-responsive, tailored prosecution and rehabilitation strategies that were consistent with international human rights standards. She underlined that children were primarily victims and had to be dealt with as such. The Executive Director called upon Member States to develop and implement comprehensive repatriation strategies in line with international law. Furthermore, she stated that bringing ISIL (Da'esh) perpetrators to justice continued to be of critical

[810] See: S/2020/95 and S/2020/774.
[811] See S/PV.8716.

importance and stressed that its institutionalization of sexual violence and slavery required special attention. The international community had an opportunity to prosecute the perpetrators, rehabilitate the victims and facilitate reconstruction and community development in places destroyed by ISIL violence.[812] Ms. Freij, a civil society representative from north-east Syria, recounted her experience as a survivor of ISIL (Da'esh) rule and her work as an activist for women's rights in civil society institutions. She requested the Council to assist civilians in preventing another humanitarian disaster in Idlib, northern Syria and the rest of the country and to make every effort to launch a process of transitional justice in Syria and end impunity so that all those responsible for perpetrating serious human rights violations would be held accountable. Further to the briefers, speakers at the meeting emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism efforts and for the perpetrators of terrorist acts to be held accountable. Council members also reaffirmed the need for international cooperation in countering terrorism, with several speakers stressing the importance of a coordinating role by the United Nations system.[813]

On 6 August 2020, at the initiative of Indonesia which held the Presidency for the month,[814] Council members held a high-level open videoconference in connection with this item and on the theme entitled "Addressing the issue of linkages between terrorism and organized crime".[815] The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia presided over the videoconference, during which Council members heard briefings by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism. The Executive Director of UNODC presented a report jointly prepared by the UNODC and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, which provided an overview of measures taken by Member States and United Nations entities to address linkages between terrorism and organized crime. She noted that many States had reported that terrorists benefited from organized crime, while some States had observed that criminal organizations were increasingly disinterested in cooperating with terrorist groups,

[812] Ibid.
[813] Ibid., South Africa, China and Viet Nam.
[814] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 30 July 2020 (S/2020/764).
[815] See S/2020/791.

potentially to avoid additional scrutiny from national authorities. She stated that many governments had taken steps to counter these threats, through adopting legislative, policy and operational responses identified in resolution 2482 (2019). She further noted that the COVID-19 pandemic posed several new challenges to national authorities, noting that organized criminal groups and terrorists could seek to exploit new vulnerabilities, and that transit patterns were shifting in view of travel restrictions and lockdown measures.[816]

In his briefing during the same videoconference, the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism stated that the report of the Secretary-General set out how the ability of terrorists to draw on organized crime, whether domestic or transnational, online or offline, could exacerbate the threat posed by terrorism to international peace and security.[817] He reported on the first Virtual Counter-Terrorism Week at the United Nations on the strategic and practical challenges of countering terrorism in a global pandemic environment, which had drawn over 1,000 participants from Member States, civil society and private sector organizations, international and regional organizations and United Nations entities. He warned that the pandemic had the potential to act as a catalyst in the spread of terrorism and violent extremism by exacerbating inequalities, undermining social cohesion and fuelling local conflicts.[818] Council members discussed the evolving linkages between organized crime and terrorism, and the threat that they could pose to international peace and security.[819] Several Council members also discussed how to address both phenomena, with some noting the changed context and challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.[820]

On 24 August 2020, Council members held an open videoconference at which the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism provided a briefing. He noted that States needed to stay attuned to how the ISIL (Da'esh) threat had evolved during and after the pandemic and that in conflict zones, the terrorist threat had increased as evidenced by

[816] Ibid.
[817] See S/2020/754.
[818] See S/2020/791.
[819] Ibid., Indonesia, Tunisia, Viet Nam, Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Niger and South Africa. In addition to Council members, other Member States submitted statements in connection with the videoconference. For more information on the discussion and statements submitted, see part VII, sect. I.
[820] See S/2020/791, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Belgium, Dominican Republic, Niger and South Africa.

the regrouping of ISIL (Da'esh) and its increasing activity in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic and among some of its regional affiliates. In non-conflict zones, the threat appeared to have decreased in the short term because of COVID-19 related measures, such as lockdowns and restrictions on movement. Nevertheless, he pointed out that there was a continued trend of attacks by individuals inspired online and acting alone or in small groups. He reiterated that the pandemic's socioeconomic fallout could exacerbate conditions conducive to terrorism and increase the medium to long-term threat, both within and outside conflict zones. He noted that more than 10,000 ISIL (Da'esh) fighters were estimated to remain active in Iraq and Syria, and that there was a significant increase in ISIL (Da'esh) attacks in both countries in 2020 as compared with 2019. Noting that the global threat from ISIL (Da'esh) was likely to increase if the international community failed to meet the challenge of repatriation, he reiterated the Secretary-General's call on Member States to meet their obligations under international law and repatriate their nationals.[821]

In her briefing during the same videoconference, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate stressed that the dire situation faced by thousands of women and children associated with ISIL (Da'esh) in the detention camps of north-eastern Syria remained a major challenge for the international community. She noted that the pandemic risked exacerbating an already untenable humanitarian, human rights and security situation. She stated that pandemic-related restrictions, including social isolation measures, curtailed religious and cultural activities and the lack of employment opportunities could exacerbate existing grievances. She noted that ISIL (Da'esh) and its affiliates took the opportunity of the increase of people's presence on the Internet to spread their propaganda. She further said that Member States had to ensure that policies adopted to curtail the spread of terrorist propaganda were human rights-compliant and gender-sensitive.[822] Many Council members agreed that the issue of foreign terrorist fighters remained a challenge.[823] Noting that the issues of relocation and returning foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members presented significant

[821] See S/2020/836.
[822] Ibid.
[823] Ibid. Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Tunisia, United States and Viet Nam.

challenges for Member States, the representative of Indonesia stressed the importance of an effective comprehensive prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration strategy, and called upon Council members to set their differences aside. In that regard, the United States expressed disappointment that Indonesia's efforts to draft a meaningful resolution on prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorists had been stymied by the refusal of Council members to include repatriation.

The issues outlined above were also addressed by the Council in the draft resolutions proposed and adopted during the period under review. On 31 August 2020, Indonesia submitted a draft resolution, which was not adopted due to the negative vote of a permanent member, namely, the United States.[824] Among other aspects, the draft resolution would have called upon Member States to assess and investigate suspected individuals whom they had reasonable grounds to believe were terrorists, including suspected foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members. It would have also called upon all Member States, to develop and implement comprehensive and tailored prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration measures for persons who were engaged in terrorism-related activity, including foreign terrorist fighters and to develop and implement risk assessment tools to identify individuals who demonstrated signs of radicalization to terrorism. In addition, the draft resolution would have encouraged all Member States to cooperate in efforts to address the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including by bringing them to justice, preventing the radicalization to terrorism and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters and accompanying family members, particularly accompanying children, including by facilitating the return of the children to their countries of origin, as appropriate and on a case by case basis.[825] In the explanation of vote submitted to the Council, the permanent mission of the United States indicated that while the draft resolution was meant to address the prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters and their accompanying family members, it failed to "even include reference to

[824] The result of the vote was a as follows: in favour: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam; against: United States; abstaining: None. See also S/2020/865. For more information on the procedural developments, including voting procedures, during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[825] See S/2020/852, paras. 3, 8, 12 and 18.

the crucial first step — repatriation to countries of origin or nationality". The permanent mission further submitted that failing to address head-on the importance of repatriation would inevitably perpetuate the problem of terrorism.[826]

On 18 December 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2557 (2020) under Chapter VII of the Charter, extending the mandate of the Monitoring Team established pursuant to paragraph 7 of resolution 1526 (2004) for a period of 12 months until December 2021.[827] In the resolution, the Council welcomed efforts by the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban in facilitating intra-Afghan negotiations and encouraged the parties to make rapid progress on a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire, and a political settlement that would end the conflict in Afghanistan and ensure that Afghanistan would never again be a safe haven for international terrorism.[828]

On 29 December 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2560 (2020) in which it stressed the important role of the ISIL (Da'esh) and Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee in identifying possible cases of non-compliance with the measures pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017).[829] The Council also encouraged Member States to more actively submit to the Committee listing requests of individuals, groups, undertakings and entities that met listing criteria in paragraph 2 of resolution 2368 (2017) and to submit to the Committee "additional identifying and other information set out in paragraph 85 of resolution 2368 (2017)" in order to keep the ISIL (Da'esh) & Al-Qaida Sanctions List reliable and up-to-date.[830] Moreover, the Council requested the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team to study the basic and extraordinary exemptions procedures set out in paragraphs 81 (a) and (b) of resolution 2368 (2017), and to provide recommendations to the Committee to determine whether or not updating those exemptions was required.[831]

Table 1
Meetings: Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

[826] See S/2020/870.
[827] Resolution 2557 (2020), para 2.
[828] Ibid., eighth preambular paragraph. On the situation in Afghanistan, see sect. 15.
[829] Resolution 2560 (2020), fifth preambular paragraph.
[830] Ibid., para. 1.
[831] Ibid., para. 2. For further information on the mandate of the Monitoring Team, see part IX, sect. I.B.1.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8716 7 February 2020	Tenth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat (S/2020/95)			Under-Secretary-General, Office of Counter-Terrorism, Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, civil society representative	All Council members, all invitees [a]	

[a] Ms. Freij participated in the meeting via videoconference from Istanbul.

Table 2
Videoconferences: Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
6 August 2020	S/2020/791	Letter dated 11 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
24 August 2020	S/2020/836	Letter dated 26 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
31 August 2020	S/2020/870	Letter dated 31 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Draft resolution S/2020/852 not adopted 14-1-0[a] S/2020/865 (Record of written procedure)
18 December 2020	S/2020/1266	Letter dated 19 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2557 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/1254 (Record of written procedure)
29 December 2020	S/2020/1311	Letter dated 29 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2560 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/1305 (Record of written procedure)

[a] *For*: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam. *Against*: United States. *Abstaining*: None.

30. Briefings

As with previous Supplements, briefings by different speakers not explicitly connected to a specific item under the Council's agenda are featured in this section. In 2020, the Security Council held one such meeting in the form of a briefing. More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held three open videoconferences to hear briefings that were not explicitly connected to any specific item on the agenda of the Council. More information on the videoconferences is provided in the tables 2 and 3 below.

Consistent with prior practice, the Council held one meeting under the item "Briefing by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe". On 6 February 2020, during the 8714th meeting, the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) briefed the Council on contemporary security challenges explaining that Albania's strategic goal at the helm of the OSCE would be to defend multilateralism at a time where it was felt under attack. He further elaborated on the three main priorities of the OSCE under the chairmanship of Albania. With regard to the first priority, namely, making a difference on the ground, he said that Albania would be promoting the work of the OSCE where it was closest to the people and in that connection, conflict resolution efforts would be at the top of the agenda. He also addressed specifically the situation in Ukraine,[832] the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, the situation in Georgia, as well as the Transnistrian settlement process in Moldova.[833] The Chairperson-in-Office noted that women continued to be disproportionately affected by conflicts in the OSCE area and were being unjustly excluded from peace efforts. Inspired by the 20th anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), he said that Albania would inject a new momentum into promoting the role of women in peace processes. He noted that Albania's second priority was to implement its commitments. In that regard, he mentioned immediate and urgent priorities such as promoting the freedom of expression and the freedom of the media, safeguarding the rights of national minorities and

[832] For further details on discussions relating to Ukraine, see part I sect. 19.
[833] See S/PV.8714.

combating violence against women. He further explained that the third priority of Albania's chairmanship was dialogue. In that connection, the Chairperson-in-Office announced that he would make it his personal commitment to advance dialogue among OSCE States and among and within OSCE States' societies, also noting that risk reduction, incident prevention and environmental protection would feature in debates among OSCE States, international organizations and civil society. He signalled, however, that a major obstacle to dialogue was the rise of intolerance, hate crimes and hate speech, and expressed the intention to redouble efforts to promote tolerance and non-discrimination.

Following the briefing, members of the Council noted the importance of cooperation with regional arrangements, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, and welcomed the continued cooperation between the Council and the OSCE in the maintenance of international peace and security.[834] Several Council members also expressed support for the efforts of the Chairperson-in-Office to feature women and peace and security as one of the top priorities during Albania's chairmanship of the OSCE.[835]

On 18 June 2020, Council members held a videoconference to hear a briefing by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. In his intervention, the High Commissioner highlighted three areas of concern. First, he addressed the rising number of displaced persons and focused on the Sahel region of West Africa and Libya. His second point concerned protection. He agreed with others' reference to COVID-19 as a protection crisis and mentioned that despite the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire, conflicts had continued to grow.[836] He made reference to the situation of refugees and displaced persons, focusing on Yemen, Venezuela, the Syrian Arab Republic and the broader region around it. Finally, he referred to the need not to give up on solutions. In that regard, he focused specifically on those countries of origin of two thirds of the refugees and people crossing borders, namely, the Syrian Arab

[834] Ibid., Viet Nam, Tunisia, France, Estonia, Niger, China, Indonesia, South Africa, Russian Federation and Belgium. For more information about the role of regional arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security, see part VIII.
[835] Ibid., Germany, Viet Nam, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom, South Africa and Belgium.
[836] In his statement, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees referred to a separate meeting under the item "Protection of civilians in armed conflict" at which COVID-19 was referred to as a protection crisis. See for further details, part I, sect. 26.

Republic, Venezuela, Afghanistan, South Sudan and Myanmar. On those specific countries, he offered his views to focus on solutions with respect to the situations in South Sudan and Myanmar. In closing, he called on Council members to echo and follow up on the ceasefire call of the Secretary-General, and to use their leadership and influence to seek out and to expand space for solutions. He expressed concern regarding the Council's divisions and his expectation that the Council would send decisive, clear and unanimous messages to end conflicts and pursue avenues for peace.[837]

In line with the previously established practice, the Council heard one briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice, held in the format of a closed videoconference.[838] In 2020, Council members held two videoconferences in connection with the item "Briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council". On 23 November 2020, Council members held a videoconference to hear a joint briefing by the Chairs of the three committees related to counterterrorism and non-proliferation, namely, the Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) and the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).[839] During their briefings, the Chairs provided an overview of the work of the three committees, including their ongoing cooperation and that of their groups of experts in assisting Member States to counter the financing of terrorism and proliferation. In their deliberations, Council members discussed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on exacerbating conditions conducive to terrorism, expressing concern that terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh) and Al-Qaida, might take advantage of the disruption and increased use of information technology.[840] In addition, while briefers and some Council members noted the importance of ensuring respect for human rights and international human rights and humanitarian law when countering terrorism,[841] the representative of the Russian Federation expressed concern about the high level of politicization of issues related to

[837] See S/2020/560.
[838] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 19.
[839] See S/2020/1143.
[840] Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, France, South Africa and Viet Nam.
[841] Ibid., Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

the protection of human rights and the fight against violent extremism and extremist ideology. The forthcoming comprehensive review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) was also raised and several Council members noted the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the initial timeline for that process.[842] In addition, in a videoconference held on 16 December 2020, Council members heard the end-of-year briefing by the outgoing Chairs of the various subsidiary bodies, namely the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia; the Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) concerning the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities; the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011); the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004); the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006); the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya; the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali; the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa.[843] In their briefings, several Chairs raised the issue of a more equitable distribution of chairmanships of subsidiary organs among the elected and permanent members of the Council.[844] Furthermore, Chairs discussed the importance of transparency and respect for the procedural aspects of the work of the respective committees and working groups.[845] Other topics discussed during the briefing included the working conditions of the members of the Panels of Experts, the implementation of sanctions measures, as well as the institutional setup for the way in which the United Nations dealt with sanctions regimes.

Table 1
Meetings: briefings by the Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

[842] Ibid., Germany, Russian Federation and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[843] See S/2020/1258.
[844] Ibid., Belgium, Indonesia, and Germany.
[845] Ibid., Belgium, Indonesia and Dominican Republic.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8714 6 February 2020				Chairperson-in-Office of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and Prime Minister and Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania	All Council members, invitee	

Table 2
Videoconferences: briefings by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
18 June 2020	S/2020/560	Letter dated 22 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Table 3
Videoconferences: briefings by Chairs of subsidiary bodies of the Security Council

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
23 November 2020	S/2020/1143	Letter dated 25 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 December 2020	S/2020/1258	Letter dated 18 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

31. The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security

During the period under review, the Security Council held no meetings in connection with the item entitled "The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security". Council members did, however, hold one videoconference in 2020. The Council also issued one presidential statement in connection with this item which was announced during a videoconference, according to the procedures established further to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.[846] More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below.[847]

On 18 December 2020, the members of the Council held a videoconference in connection with this item focused on "Strengthening the cooperation between the Security Council and the International Court of Justice". At the videoconference, Council members heard a briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice, who emphasized the need to strengthen the partnership between the Council and the Court to uphold the rule of law at the international level.[848] He pointed out that the Council had only once recommended that parties refer a dispute to the Court, in the Corfu Channel case, and had only once requested an advisory opinion, in the matter concerning the case of "Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia". He indicated however, that the vitality of the relationship between the two principal organs could not be evaluated by the quantity, but rather by the quality, of their collaboration. Stating that the Court had consistently supported the mission of the Council to maintain international peace and security, the President of the Court made some recommendations that could further reinforce cooperation between the two organs. Firstly, he shared the view of the General Assembly that a request for an advisory opinion from the Court could play an important role in the Council's work on the prevention of situations or disputes from becoming a threat to international peace and security, and expressed his belief that the

[846] For more information on the procedures working methods during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[847] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 25.
[848] See S/2020/1286. For further details on this discussion, see part IV, sect III.

Council could consider such a possibility more often. Secondly, he suggested the possibility of expanded dialogue between the Court and the Council in that, in addition to the annual briefing of the President of the Court to the Council, the Council could include in its schedule a visit to the Court once every three years, following the triennial change in the composition of the Court. Lastly, his third suggestion concerned the jurisdiction of the Court. In this regard, he drew attention to the presidential statements issued in 2006, 2010 and 2012,[849] in which the Council had called upon States to consider accepting the jurisdiction of the Court in accordance with its Statute. He noted that in the previous eight years, no further presidential statements had been issued by the Council expressing the belief that such statements contributed to strengthening the relationship between the two organs, as well as the international rule of law and that they could be made periodically — every three to five years — starting from the date of the videoconference.

Following the briefing, Council members affirmed the important role of the International Court of Justice in promoting and strengthening the rule of law, including in preventing conflicts and facilitating lasting peace and stability. In accordance with the procedures agreed upon further to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to Council members, 11 delegations submitted written statements.[850] Many participants noted the complementary nature of the mandates of the Court and the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security. In this connection, most participants called for strengthening the relationship between the Council and the Court to promote the peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law. Many participants called for a greater involvement with the Court by, among other things, making use of the referral of legal disputes to the Court whenever necessary, in accordance with Article 36, paragraph 3, of the Charter.[851] Participants at the videoconference made concrete proposals, such as inviting the President of the International Court of Justice to brief the Council when non-compliance with Court decisions could threaten international peace and security,

[849] See S/PRST/2006/28, S/PRST/2010/11 and S/PRST/2012/1.
[850] See S/2020/1286, Austria, Bangladesh, Brazil, Denmark, Japan, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Peru and Portugal. For further details, see part II, sect. I.
[851] See S/2020/1286, President of the International Court of Justice, Estonia, Niger, Tunisia, Austria, Bangladesh, Japan, Liechtenstein, Peru and Portugal. For further details on the discussion, see part VI, sect. IV.

having the Council more involved on following-up to provisional measures specified by the International Court of Justice[852] or fully supporting the Court's decisions,[853] including by ensuring compliance with the Court's judgments.[854] At the videoconference, the representative of South Africa announced that his delegation had drafted and placed before the Council for its consideration a draft presidential statement addressing the aforementioned issues. He expressed hope of reaching an agreement on the text, which he said would help advance the peaceful resolution of conflicts and put an end to violent conflicts.

Further to the videoconference, on 21 December 2020, the Council issued a presidential statement in connection with this item, by which it noted the 75th anniversary of the Charter and the 100th anniversary of the Statute of the Permanent Court of International Justice.[855] It reaffirmed its commitment to international law and the purposes and principles of the Charter including the importance of the International Court of Justice in the international architecture and the maintenance of international peace and security.[856] The Council stressed the importance of all the provisions of the Charter regarding the peaceful settlement of disputes and the International Court of Justice, including those pertaining to the interaction between the Council and the International Court of Justice.[857] The Council recognized the positive contribution of the Court to the rule of law at the international level, and its key role in adjudicating disputes among States, and the need to enhance efforts aimed at capacity building and assisting Member States.[858] The Council also expressed its continued commitment to foster interaction between the International Court of Justice and the Council in accordance with their respective mandates under the Charter of the United Nations.[859]

Videoconferences: The promotion and strengthening of the rule of law in the maintenance of international peace and security

[852] See S/2020/1286, Belgium.
[853] Ibid., Mexico.
[854] Ibid., Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[855] See S/PRST/2020/13, second paragraph.
[856] Ibid., first and fifth paragraphs.
[857] Ibid., third paragraph.
[858] Ibid., sixth and eight paragraphs.
[859] Ibid., tenth paragraph.

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
18 December 2020	S/2020/1286	Letter dated 23 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
21 December 2020	No record (see A/75/2, part I, IV.B)		S/PRST/2020/13

32. Items relating to non-proliferation

A. Non-proliferation

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting under the item entitled "Non-proliferation" which took the form of a briefing.[860] More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. In 2020, the Council failed to adopt a draft resolution in connection with this item due to the lack of a sufficient number of votes. Council members also held three open videoconferences in connection with this item. More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below.[861]

Under this item, Council members heard briefings by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the representative of Belgium as the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

On 26 February 2020, the Security Council held a meeting under the sub-item "Supporting the Non-proliferation Treaty ahead of the 2020 Review Conference".[862] The Council was briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and the President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. During the meeting, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs reaffirmed the Treaty's crucial role in constraining the proliferation of nuclear weapons as well as its function as a de facto negotiating forum for nuclear disarmament. She added that failure to secure a successful outcome at the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) would risk undermining the value that many Member States placed on the Treaty and devalue the review cycle as a way to strengthen the

[860] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II. For more information on the procedure and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[861] See also A/75/2, part II, chap. 31.
[862] See S/PV.8733.

implementation of the Treaty and the regime as a whole. She suggested several issues that should form a part of any consensus document, including a high-level reaffirmation of commitment to the Treaty and all its obligations, the recommitment to the norm against the use of nuclear weapons, the development of a package of risk-reduction measures to avoid the prospect of nuclear-weapon use, the endorsement of the additional protocol as the safeguards standard, and a new vision for disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control to address current nuclear weapons challenges. She underscored the importance of the reaffirmation of Council members' support for the Treaty and an expression of their commitment to securing success at the Review Conference, given that many Council members would be key players there. The President-designate said that the Treaty and its Review Conference represented an almost universal forum to discuss issues central to international peace and security, which gave the Treaty a unique level of legitimacy. Explicitly referring to Article 26 of the Charter, which conferred upon the Council the responsibility for disarmament and the regulation of armaments, he noted that issues concerning disarmament and arms control had been an important part of the United Nations since its inception.[863] He observed that the Review Conference came at a time of growing concerns and uncertainties and urged to open up to all voices and ideas, making sure that the next generation of leaders and practitioners were included in the conversation and that the voices of women and the gender perspective were considered and included in the conclusions. While acknowledging the Treaty's valuable contribution to international peace and security, several Council members expressed their concern regarding the termination of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF), the future of the New START Treaty, the nuclear situation in North Korea and the standoff involving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).[864] Council Members further noted that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remained crucial in constraining new weapons development and called on all States that had not signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty to do so.[865]

[863] For further information on the practice of the Council in connection with Article 26, see part V, sect. III.
[864] Ibid., Germany, Russian Federation, China, Dominican Republic, United Kingdom, Estonia, France, United States and Belgium.
[865] Ibid., Germany, Viet Nam, Dominican Republic, United Kingdom, Estonia, France and Belgium.

The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs briefed Council members twice, in June and December 2020, in relation to the ninth and tenth reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2231 (2015).[866] During her first briefing, on 30 June 2020, in addition to addressing some of the details of the Secretary-General's ninth report with respect to the implementation of the nuclear-, ballistic missile- and arms-related provisions of the Plan, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs expressed regret at the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA. She added that the United States' re-imposition of national sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran and the decision not to extend waivers for the trade in oil with the Islamic Republic of Iran and on all remaining JCPOA-originating projects were contrary to the goals of the JCPOA. Referencing a letter from the Iranian Foreign Minister to the Secretary-General indicating that the United States sanctions had been constraining his country's response to the coronavirus disease pandemic, she recalled the Secretary-General's appeal for the waiving of sanctions that could undermine a country's capacity to respond to the pandemic. The Under-Secretary-General also expressed regret that the Islamic Republic of Iran had surpassed JCPOA-stipulated limits on its uranium-enrichment level and its stockpiles of heavy water and low-enriched uranium and that it had lifted JCPOA limitations on its nuclear research and development activities. She appealed to the Islamic Republic of Iran to return to the full implementation of the JCPOA, encouraged all JCPOA participants to resolve all differences within the dispute-resolution mechanism under the Plan and urged all Member States to avoid provocative rhetoric and actions which could have a further negative impact on the JCPOA and regional stability. Notwithstanding the challenges to the JCPOA, she recalled that the JCPOA remained the best way to ensure the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme and that faithful adherence to resolution 2231 (2015) was fundamental to regional stability.[867] The Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations stated that while nuclear proliferation remained a global threat with potentially worldwide consequences. The JCPOA had removed the prospect of a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic of Iran from the regional security equation in a verifiable manner. He noted that

[866] S/2020/531 and S/2020/1177.
[867] See S/2020/644.

it was deeply worrisome that the Islamic Republic of Iran had decreased its nuclear-related JCPOA commitments, particularly Iran's continued accumulation of low-enriched uranium in excess of the JCPOA stockpile and enrichment level thresholds, the continued expansion of research and development with advanced centrifuges and the enrichment activities in Fordow. He also recognized the challenges brought about by the United States' withdrawal from the JCPOA and the reimposition of sanctions, and expressed deep regret at the United States' decision to end the three waivers covering key JCPOA nuclear projects in Iran, including the Arak modernization project. The representative of Belgium, as the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), informed Council members that the ninth report of the Facilitator had not been approved by all the members of the Council, and briefed instead on the highlights of the activities of the 2231 format between December 2019 and June 2020.[868] The representative of the Russian Federation expressed profound disappointment with the Secretary-General's ninth report (S/2020/531) on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015) adding that it had clearly failed to meet the high standards of impartiality expected in such documents. While expressing regret at the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, several Council members confirmed their commitment to preserving the agreement. [869] Several Council members also expressed regret at the imposition of unilateral sanctions by the United States.[870] The Secretary of State of the United States said that the Secretary-General's report confirmed that weapons used to attack Saudi Arabia in September 2019 were of Iranian origin and that the weapons interdicted off the coast of Yemen in November of 2019 and February 2020 were also of Iranian origin adding that the Islamic Republic of Iran was already violating the arms embargo, even before its expiration date. He also said that the Islamic Republic of Iran had continued to supply militia groups with arms that were used against the United States and coalition forces. In that regard, he said that the overwhelming preference of the United States was to work with the Council to extend the arms embargo to protect human life, to protect the United States' national security as well as the national security of Council members.

[868] See S/2020/644. See also S/2020/508.
[869] Ibid., Belgium, China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa.
[870] Ibid., Belgium, China, France, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa.

He also welcomed the statement of the United Kingdom, France and Germany recognizing that lifting the embargo would have major implications for regional security and stability adding that renewing the arms embargo would exert more pressure on Tehran "to start behaving like a normal nation.". The representative of the Russian Federation submitted that there was no legal or other grounds to raise the issue of arms embargo in the Security Council. The approval-based procedures for the transfer of armaments to and from Iran had been designed as temporary measures, and their extension beyond 18 October 2020 had never been either envisaged or discussed. Given all that, he considered it naive to suggest that there could be room for engaging the Council on this issue. The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran stressed that the United States had persistently violated resolution 2231 (2015), a resolution that it had co-sponsored, and had tried to force other States to violate that very text. He also said that the timetable for the removal of arms restrictions embodied in resolution 2231 (2015)was an inseparable part of the hard-won compromise enabling the JCPOA participants to finally agree on the overall package of the JCPOA and resolution 2231 (2015). The resolution explicitly urged its "full implementation on the timetable". In that regard, he added that any attempt to change or amend the agreed timetable was thus tantamount to undermining resolution 2231 (2015) in its entirety.

On 14 August 2020, the United States submitted a draft resolution, which was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.[871] According to the draft resolution, the Council would have decided that paragraph 5 and subparagraphs (b) and (e) of paragraph 6 of Annex B of resolution 2231 (2015) continued to apply until the Council decided otherwise, notwithstanding the durations specified in each paragraph or subparagraph.[872] This would have included preventing the supply, sale, or transfer of arms or related materiel from the Islamic Republic of Iran and preventing the supply, sale, or transfer of any battle tanks, armoured combat vehicles, large caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, warships,

[871] The result of the vote was as follows: in favour: Dominican Republic, United States; against: China, Russian Federation; abstaining: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Viet Nam. See also S/2020/803. For more information on voting procedure during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[872] S/2020/797, para. 1.

missiles or missile systems to the Islamic Republic of Iran.[873] In their explanations of vote, Council members noted that they remained committed to the full implementation of the JCPOA and that the text of the resolution would have jeopardized regional stability and security.[874] In the explanation of vote submitted by the permanent representative of the United States, she reiterated the view that the Security Council's "credibility was in tatters". She noted that by not adopting the proposed resolution, the Council had validated the world's "number one state sponsor of terror". She further highlighted her country's determination to contain "the Iranian threat" and added that unlocking Iran's ability to purchase sophisticated missile batteries, fighter jets, tanks and other modern weapons would trigger a regional arms race. She added that the defeat of the draft resolution outlined perfectly the Council's condition of paralysis and inaction in the face of growing threats. In contrast, the representative of China said that the voting result showed that unilateralism received no support and that "bullying" would fail. In its pursuit of unilateralism and "America first" in recent years, he added, the United States had abandoned its international obligations and withdrawn from multilateral agreements and international organizations, destroying its own credibility. He indicated also that the United States had repeatedly claimed that it would invoke the snapback mechanism. Having withdrawn from the JCPOA, according to the representative of China, the United States was no longer a JCPOA participant and therefore ineligible to invoke a snapback. Should the United States insist regardless of international opinion, it was doomed to fail, he said. Council members encouraged the parties concerned to continue dialogue, with a view to resolving their differences peacefully, including through the JCPOA dispute resolution mechanism.[875] The representative of the Russian Federation said that it was high time to launch a broad regional dialogue embracing all interested parties to de-escalate tensions and look for pragmatic compromise-based decisions. He referred to the suggestion made by the President of the Russian Federation on 14 August 2020 to convene an online meeting of the Heads of State of the permanent members of the Council, with the

[873] Resolution 2231 (2015), Annex B, paras. 5 and 6.
[874] See S/2020/805, Belgium, China, p. 22 (Estonia), France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.
[875] Ibid., China, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

participation of the heads of Germany and the Islamic Republic of Iran in order to outline steps that could prevent confrontation or a spike in tensions in the Council.

During the second briefing for the year in connection with this item, on 22 December 2020, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs explained that in the preparation of the tenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), careful note had been taken of the developments in the Security Council following the receipt of the letters from the United States on 20 August and 23 September 2020.[876] She noted the view of the United States that, as of 20 September 2020, all provisions of prior resolutions that had been terminated by resolution 2231 (2015) applied in the same manner. As she further explained, the United States was also of the view that the measures contained in paragraphs 7, 8 and 16 to 20 of resolution 2231 (2015) were also terminated. She further noted that the majority of Council members and the Islamic Republic of Iran had written to the Council stating that, among other things, the 20 August 2020 letter from the United States did not initiate the process set forth in paragraph 11 of resolution 2231 (2015).[877] She added that those States had expressed their strong support for the JCPOA and the continued implementation of resolution 2231 (2015). The Under-Secretary-General further stated that both the President of the Council for the month of August and the President for the month of September had indicated that they were not in a position to take any action with regard to the letter from the United States dated 20 August 2020. She added that the President of the Council in October had also taken note of those developments. She also expressed regret at the steps taken by the United States when it withdrew from the Plan, as well as the steps taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran to reduce some of its nuclear-related commitments under the Plan.[878] The Head of the European Union Delegation,

[876] See S/2020/815 and S/2020/927.
[877] See letter from permanent representative of Belgium dated 21 September 2020, on behalf of Belgium, Estonia, France and Germany (S/2020/931); letters from permanent representative of China dated 20 August 2020 (S/2020/817) and 20 September 2020 (S/2020/923); letter from Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Germany dated 26 August 2020, (also on behalf of Belgium, Estonia and France (S/2020/839); letter from permanent representative of Indonesia dated 21 August 2020 (S/2020/824); letters from permanent representatives of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia dated 20 August 2020 (S/2020/821) and 21 September 2020 (S/2020/928); and letters from permanent representative of the Russian Federation dated 20 August 2020 (S/2020/816), 21 August 2020 (S/2020/828) and 20 September 2020 (S/2020/924).
[878] See S/2020/1324. For the report of the Secretary-General, see S/2020/1177. For further details on the discussion in connection with the snapback mechanism, see part V, sect. II.B.

speaking on behalf of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Coordinator of the Joint Commission of the JCPOA, stated that the remaining participants of the JCPOA had demonstrated their conviction and willingness to work diplomatically to preserve the deal, proving its importance and value. He expressed particular concern about the Islamic Republic of Iran's continued accumulation of low-enriched uranium in excess of the JCPOA stockpile-and-enrichment-level thresholds. He also expressed his appreciation at the indications of the return of the Islamic Republic of Iran to full JCPOA implementation. Having taken note of the United States' announcement and its position regarding the so-called "snapback mechanism" under resolution 2231 (2015), he stressed that the United States could not be considered a JCPOA participant State and could not initiate the process of reinstating United Nations sanctions under resolution 2231 (2015).[879] As the Security Council Facilitator for the implementation of resolution 2231 (2015), the representative of Belgium briefed Council members on the tenth report of the Facilitator.[880] He noted that following the 20 August 2020 letter from the Secretary of State of the United States, 13 Council members had expressed differing views on the letter, which had been duly reflected in the report. He explained that according to annex B, the sanctions against arms transfers to and from the Islamic Republic of Iran, as well as the travel ban, had expired on 18 October 2020 and that differing stances on that matter, too, had been expressed by Member States in letters circulated during the reporting period.[881] Further to the briefings, several Council members reiterated their position regarding the United States' attempt to initiate the process of reinstating United Nations sanctions under resolution 2231 (2015) as either having no legal basis or going against its obligations under resolution 2231 (2015). [882] The representative of the United Kingdom expressed the hope that the following year the United States would rejoin the JCPOA and the Islamic Republic of Iran would return to compliance with the agreement. She added that a return to diplomacy represented the best means of bringing greater security to the region, upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime and preventing the Islamic Republic of Iran from developing a

[879] See S/2020/1324.
[880] See S/2020/1244.
[881] See S/2020/1324.
[882] Ibid., China, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.

nuclear weapon. The representative of the United States said that the Council had a responsibility to address Iran's destabilizing behaviour. He said that a failure to do so would call into question the credibility of the organ and send a dangerous message to other "rogue actors and despots around the world". He recognized the report's attention to the snapback of previous United Nations sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran, and regretted the decision of the Secretary-General to encourage the continued use of the procurement channel in resolution 2231 (2015), which he considered to be inconsistent with the snapback. He then called on the Secretary-General and all Council members to fully implement all United Nations sanctions measures, including those reimposed through the snapback mechanism. Council members further expressed concerns about the non-compliance by the Islamic Republic of Iran with its nuclear obligations and noted, with regret, the law recently adopted by the Iranian Parliament that could pave the way to the significant development of Iran's enrichment programme and reduced access for the International Atomic Energy Agency.[883] The representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran said that by pursuing a hostile policy towards the JCPOA and his country since 8 May 2018, the United States had also engaged in persistent widespread public and private harassment of Iran's business partners. By doing so, he argued that the United States had committed multiple cases of "significant non-performance" under the JCPOA and was, therefore, in continuous systematic material breach of its legal obligations under resolution 2231 (2015), the Charter of the United Nations and international law. He explained that instead of taking remedial measures, as authorized in the JCPOA, the Islamic Republic of Iran, upon the request of the E-3 — France, Germany and the United Kingdom — had exercised restraint and strategic patience for one year. He noted that maximum restraint had been met with the so-called maximum pressure of the United States and its ever-increasing unlawful sanctions, as well as the utter failure of the E-3 and the European Union to implement their commitments. He added that the Islamic Republic of Iran had been left with no choice but to take certain remedial steps, in full conformity with paragraphs 26 and 36 of the JCPOA, pursuant to which, in the case of "a re-introduction or re-imposition of the sanctions", the Islamic Republic of Iran had the right "to cease performing its

[883] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States.

commitments under this JCPOA in whole or in part". He noted that the United States had imposed over 1,500 sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, adding that such sanctions were in fact "an all-out war with economic measures instead of weapons". He added that the so-called maximum pressure policy of the United States against the Islamic Republic of Iran would not yield any result and noted that the only way out was to go back to the prompt, full and unconditional implementation of the JCPOA.

Table 1
Meetings: Non-proliferation

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8733 26 February 2020	Supporting the Non-proliferation Treaty ahead of the 2020 Review Conference			High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, President-designate of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons	All Council members[a], all invitees	

Table 2
Videoconferences: Non-proliferation

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 June 2020	S/2020/644	Letter dated 2 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
14 August 2020	S/2020/805	Letter dated 13 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Draft resolution S/2020/797 not adopted 2-2-11[a] S/2020/803 (Record of written procedure)
22 December 2020	S/2020/1324	Letter dated 24 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[a] *For*: Dominican Republic, United States. *Against*: China, Russian Federation. *Abstaining*: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

B. Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea

During the period under review, Council members held a videoconference in connection with this item to announce the adoption of a resolution, under Chapter VII of the Charter.[884] In addition, Council members held consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences in connection with this item.[885] More information on the videoconference is given in the table below.

On 30 March 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2515 (2020). By the resolution, the Council extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts appointed pursuant to resolution 1874 (2009) in support of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006), for a period of 12 months, until 30 April 2021.[886] The Council requested the Panel to provide periodic reports and expressed its intent to review the Panel's mandate and to take appropriate action regarding a further extension no later than 26 March 2021 as well as to continue to follow the work of the Panel.[887]

Videoconferences: Non-proliferation/ Democratic People's Republic of Korea

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
30 March 2020	S/2020/270		Resolution 2515 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/246 (Record of written procedure)

[884] Due to technical difficulties, instead of an open videoconference to announce the vote on resolution 2515 (2020) the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[885] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 34. See also S/2020/344, , S/2020/1045 and S/2021/203.
[886] Resolution 2515 (2020), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.
[887] Resolution 2515 (2020), paras. 1, 2 and 4.

33. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting under the item entitled "Peacebuilding and sustaining peace" which took the form of an open debate.[888] More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers is given in table 1 below. Council members also held three open videoconferences in connection with this item and the Council adopted one resolution.[889] More information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below. In addition to meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members also held an informal interactive dialogue on 22 July in connection with this item.[890]

In 2020, Council members were briefed by a variety of speakers, including the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the former Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, the President of the Economic and Social Council and representatives from other international and regional organizations such as the African Union Development Agency and speakers from civil society and non-governmental organizations.

On 13 February 2020, at the initiative of Belgium, which held the Presidency for the month,[891] the Council convened a high-level open debate under the sub-item entitled "Transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations". The High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that lasting peace was interlinked with justice, development and respect for human rights. Her experience in Chile had convinced her that transitional justice processes that were context-specific, nationally owned and focused on victims could connect, empower and transform societies, thereby contributing to lasting and just peace. She emphasized truth-seeking initiatives as they enabled victims to recount their experiences and opened new spaces where victims and perpetrators could re-establish a connection, adding that such processes were often deeply empowering for victims. The High Commissioner further noted that criminal

[888] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.
[889] Resolution 2558 (2020). For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[890] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 28. See also, S/2021/9.
[891] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 4 February 2020 (S/2020/98).

accountability was vital but should be accompanied by a broad range of complementary measures to support truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.[892] Following the briefing by the High Commissioner, the President of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition of Colombia stated that transitional justice was the most comprehensive, dynamic and promising peacebuilding instrument at the disposal of victims around the world and of peoples who had endured gross human rights violations during situations of internal armed conflict. His briefing focused on five main points: victims, truth in transitional justice, non-repetition, comprehensive transition and the role of the Security Council and of the international community. With regard to the latter, he said that the Council and the international community had to play a vital role in ensuring transitional justice. Peace was the responsibility of a nation's citizens, but the cases that called for transitional justice involved extreme ruptures in the human experience. Ensuring transitional justice was therefore incumbent on the world community, as these were dynamically and externally interrelated conflicts that no country could manage alone.[893] The Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa, Trustee of the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre and Chair of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan stated that it was important to ensure that peace and justice were seen as mutually reinforcing imperatives and not replaced by the erroneous notion that peace must come first, before accountability. She called upon the Council to address impunity using a prevention lens to ensure the non-recurrence of violations, as well as to address the indirect causes of conflict that exacerbated conflict, namely, structural violence, discrimination, economic exploitation, unequal power relations and climate justice.

During the discussion, several Council members shared the experience of their respective countries' national reconciliation processes.[894] Several Council members called for inclusive transitional justice and highlighted the importance of the role of women in reconciliation processes.[895] During the debate, some speakers emphasized the importance of accountability for

[892] S/PV.8723.
[893] Ibid.
[894] Ibid., Niger, Estonia, South Africa, Tunisia and Germany.
[895] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, South Africa, United States, Indonesia, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominican Republic and Viet Nam.

reconciliation processes and stressed the need to combat impunity.[896] Some argued that the International Criminal Court could help to bring justice or to support victims of gross violations.[897] Several Council members rejected one-size-fits-all strategies or generic approaches and argued that transitional justice processes should take into consideration national and local contexts.[898] Council members stated that the Council should play a greater role in promoting and supporting transitional justice processes.[899]

On 12 August 2020, at the initiative of Indonesia, which held the Presidency for the month,[900] Council members held an open videoconference in connection with this item and under the sub-item entitled "Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace". Council members were briefed by the Secretary-General, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Director of the New York University Center on International Cooperation.[901]

The Secretary-General stated that the COVID-19 pandemic threatened hard-won development and peacebuilding gains and risked exacerbating conflicts or fomenting new ones. He identified three key dangers, namely, the erosion of public trust, the destabilization of the global economic order, and the weakening of the social fabric. Nevertheless, he argued that the pandemic also created opportunities for peace, noting that the appeal for a global ceasefire had prompted positive responses from Governments and non-State actors and that the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) had been a step in the right direction. He further called upon the Council to use its influence for an investment in prevention. In that regard, he stated that the responses to the pandemic had to be conflict-sensitive and inclusive. In addition, he argued that sustaining peace required an integrated and coherent approach through strong collaboration among humanitarian, development and peace actors. In that regard, he noted that the Council and the

[896] Ibid., Belgium, Niger, Estonia, Tunisia, United Kingdom, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Germany.
[897] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, Tunisia, Germany and France.
[898] Ibid., Belgium, South Africa, United States, Indonesia, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, France, China, Viet Nam and Russian Federation.
[899] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, South Africa, Indonesia, Tunisia, Germany and Dominican Republic. For further details on the discussion, see part VI, sect. IV.
[900] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 30 July 2020 (S/2020/765).
[901] See S/2020/799. Viet Nam was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs; Estonia and Indonesia were represented by their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs; South Africa was represented by its Minister for International Relations and Cooperation; and Germany was represented by its Minister of State of the German Federal Foreign Office.

Peacebuilding Commission could help marshal a collaborative response to the peacebuilding impact of the pandemic, drawing on lessons from previous health crises, such as the Ebola virus disease outbreak. The Secretary-General added that the approach to the peacebuilding needs in the context of the pandemic had to be flexible and tailored, citing examples from the Peacebuilding Fund.[902] In his statement, the former Secretary-General welcomed the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) calling for a humanitarian ceasefire, but expressed regret that valuable months had been wasted in arguments over the details of the text. That, he said, had weakened the message that the Council needed to send to all warring parties, namely, that it was the time to confront a common enemy. He noted that the impact of the pandemic on conflict-affected settings had been much worse than initially thought, both in terms of the immediate health and humanitarian ramifications, but also in the areas of social cohesion, governance and the rule of law. He stressed that global solidarity had been loosened, while multilateralism had been under threat. Noting that the economic impacts of the pandemic would be both long-lasting and severe, he cited warnings of famines by the World Food Programme and the loss of education opportunities. With reference to the joint resolutions on peacebuilding adopted by the Council and the General Assembly (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262), and the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the former Secretary-General stressed that they had offered an opportunity to the United Nations to focus on preventing conflicts so that the systemic causes of conflicts, rather than just the symptoms, were holistically addressed, and the lessons learned could also be applied to the response to COVID-19. He said that the experience of the crisis had to also spur to change the priorities and the understandings of what threats and values really mattered, addressing the inequalities in societies and the gaps in social protection. Furthermore, the pandemic had demonstrated the genuine utility of sustaining peace and proved the benefits of enhancing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and served as an opportunity to promote greater discussions and activities on emerging threats. It had also shown that the United Nations needed to work more effectively with various partners, including regional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. In this regard, he added that the Peacebuilding Commission was well positioned to help

[902] Ibid.

synergize multi-stakeholder partnerships by making full use of its distinctive convening power.[903] The Director of the New York University Center on International Cooperation stated that the pandemic had exposed fragility in all countries, in health systems and economic, social and political fabric. She identified five major drivers of conflict, namely, the economic shock and rising inequality, the practical problems in convening peace processes and elections, growing food insecurity, a decrease in remittances and issues concerning trade and migration, and inequal access to public-health goods. Nevertheless, she argued that positive opportunities for peacebuilding existed, such as the unprecedented demand for more international collective action, the call for ceasefires issued by the Secretary-General and supported in resolution 2532 (2020), the opportunity to use a sustaining peace lens from early on in the response to the pandemic and the investment in universal health and equal access to vaccines. She added that these problems could become international threats to peace and security if not addressed by the Council, arguing that they formed an example of an extreme public health and economic shock that deserved to qualify as peacebuilding risk.[904]

Council members warned that the pandemic threatened to reverse or delay hard-won peacebuilding gains in conflict-affected areas.[905] Some speakers stressed the importance of international cooperation and multilateralism in the fight against the pandemic.[906] Council members welcomed and reaffirmed the Secretary-General's appeal for an immediate global ceasefire and facilitation of humanitarian activities during the period of crisis.[907] Furthermore, some participants called for the lifting of sanctions, arguing that they could undermine countries' ability to address the pandemic.[908] Some speakers emphasized the inclusion of both women and youth in the response to the pandemic and in peacebuilding processes in general.[909] Several Council members highlighted the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) during

[903] See S/2020/799.
[904] Ibid., pp. 8-9.
[905] Ibid., Indonesia, Viet Nam, South Africa, Germany, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the United Kingdom. For further details on the discussion, see part VII, sect. I.
[906] See S/2020/799, Viet Nam, South Africa, Germany, Belgium, China, France and Tunisia.
[907] Ibid., Viet Nam, South Africa, China and Niger.
[908] Ibid., Viet Nam, South Africa, China, Russian Federation and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
[909] Ibid., Estonia, Germany, Dominican Republic, France, Niger and Tunisia.

the pandemic,[910] some of which called for a greater advisory role for the PBC vis-à-vis the Council.[911]

On 3 November 2020, at the initiative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which held the Presidency for the month,[912] Council members held an open videoconference in connection with this item and on the theme "Contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity".[913] Council members heard briefings by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency, the Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, in his capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council.[914]

The Deputy Secretary-General stated that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to exacerbate the risks and drivers of conflict, reversing development and peacebuilding gains and aggravating conflicts and undermining efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. She stated that the climate emergency was a major driver of inequality, insecurity and conflict. Noting that the drivers of conflict were not static, she stressed that building and sustaining peace required addressing the root causes as they developed and interacted with one another. She argued that the pandemic had highlighted the necessity of investing in inclusive, equitable governance and institutions, as well as tackling root causes, in order to address the drivers of all kinds of crises and shocks.[915] The Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency drew attention to the critical situation in West Africa in general, and in the Sahel in particular. Given the high natural population growth, those States and their Governments'

[910] Ibid., Estonia, South Africa, Germany, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, France, Russian Federation and United Kingdom.
[911] Ibid., Estonia, Germany and Dominican Republic.
[912] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 30 October 2020 (S/2020/1064).
[913] An analytical summary of the videoconference was circulated by letter dated 29 December 2020 (S/2020/1328).
[914] See S/2020/1090. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was represented by its Prime Minister, Minister for the Public Service, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs; Tunisia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Belgium was represented by its Minister of Development Cooperation; Estonia was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; Germany was represented by its Minister of State of the German Federal Foreign Office; the Russian Federation was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; South Africa was represented by its Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation; the United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia; and Viet Nam was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.
[915] Ibid.

capacity to provide public services and administer their territory would remain glaringly inadequate. He emphasized the security crisis throughout the region that affected civilian populations, causing food insecurity and displacement of populations. Moreover, he said that structural obstacles to development and the challenging security situation were compounded by new risk factors exacerbating an already fragile situation, such as the warming in the Sahel and the increase in the frequency of extreme weather events. He suggested several measures to mitigate the socioeconomic fragility and financial poverty of States, and concluded by emphasizing the importance of data, their analysis and the consensus built around them as tools for the formulation of holistic, coherent and sustainable policies and methods of intervention. The Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies highlighted the reparatory justice movement against the legacies of slavery, violent colonization and institutional racism. He called upon the United Nations to reconvene the 1960s Special Committee on Decolonization to settle the matter of reparations, noting that it was a necessary part of the Decade of Action adopted by the United Nations to alleviate the continuing suffering of people of African descent who had been the targeted victims of violent colonization. He also called upon the Council to acknowledge the reparations for the slavery movement and to "assist the world in moving on and beyond the historical site of these crimes". The Permanent Representative of Pakistan and President of the Economic and Social Council referred to Articles 55 and 65 of the Charter and argued that the Charter's framers had clearly conceived that the United Nations would both collectively maintain and enforce peace as well as create the conditions for peace and stability. He argued that the United Nations' Member States had failed to live up to the ideals of collective and cooperative security and recalled in that regard the Secretary-General's observation that "inequality was the hallmark of our times". He stressed that the origins of many, if not most, of the conflicts and disputes on the agenda of the Council could be traced to this unequal world order and called for the implementation by the international community of several forms of debt suspension and restructuring, as well as reforms to address structural inequalities.[916]

[916] For further information on the relations between the Council and the Economic and Social Council, see part IV, sect. II.

Several Council members stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed vulnerabilities and exacerbated root causes of conflict.[917] Council members also highlighted climate change as a major driver of conflict.[918] The representative of the Russian Federation stated, however, that climate change was not to be considered as a universal factor underlying conflict and global insecurity. Council members called for a whole-of-system approach to peacebuilding with an enhanced coordination among United Nations institutions and agencies.[919] Some Council members underscored the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations.[920] Several Council members stressed that peace and development were linked and interdependent.[921] Several participants acknowledged the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and called for the strengthening of its advisory role.[922]

In 2020, the Council unanimously adopted one resolution in connection with this item. Following the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace,[923] the General Assembly and the Council concluded the 2020 comprehensive review process of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture through the adoption of identical resolutions, namely, resolution 70/262 and resolution 2558 (2020).[924] By resolution 2558 (2020), the Council reaffirmed that development, peace and security, and human rights were interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Moreover, the Council expressed grave concern regarding the devastating impact of

[917] See S/2020/1090, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Germany, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam, China, Niger, Dominican Republic, Indonesia and France.
[918] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, Germany, South Africa, United Kingdom, China, Niger, Dominican Republic, Indonesia and France.
[919] Ibid., Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium, Russian Federation, South Africa, China, Indonesia and France.
[920] Ibid., South Africa, Viet Nam, China, Niger and Indonesia,
[921] Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, South Africa, United Kingdom, China, Niger, Indonesia and France.
[922] Ibid., Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark (also on behalf of the Nordic countries), El Salvador, European Union, Georgia, Guatemala, Ireland, Japan, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland and United Arab Emirates. For further information on the Peacebuilding Commission, see part IX, sect. VII.
[923] See S/2020/773. In addition to the report of the Secretary-General, inputs for the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture were also provided by, among others, the Peacebuilding Commission through its letter dated 2 July 2020 (S/2020/645) and the group of Independent Eminent Persons through its letters dated 6 July 2020 (S/2020/678). The group of Independent Eminent Persons was requested to submit their reflections on the implementation of the resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture through identical letters dated 31 January 2020 and 3 February 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (S/2020/91).
[924] For more information on relations between the Council and the General Assembly, see part IV, sect. I.

the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, especially in conflict-affected countries.[925] The Council welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace by Member States as well as the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission, and called upon it to continue strengthening its advisory, bridging and convening roles in support of nationally-owned priorities and efforts in the countries and regions under its consideration. The Council noted that peacebuilding financing remained a critical challenge, and therefore took note of the General Assembly decision to convene a high-level meeting in the 76th session to advance, explore and consider options for ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding. By the same resolution, the Council called for a further comprehensive review of United Nations peacebuilding in 2025, and requested the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly and the Council an interim report in 2022 and a second, detailed report in 2024 in advance of the review, as well as to continue to present a report every two years following that review, on continued implementation of the resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.[926]

Table 1
Meeting: Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Meeting and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8723 13 February 2020	Transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations Letter dated 4 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/98)		42 Member States[a]	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; President of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition of Colombia; Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa; Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Head of Delegation of the	All Council members[b] and all invitees[c]	

[925] Resolution 2558 (2020), third and seventh preambular paragraphs.
[926] Ibid., paras. 1, 2, 4 and 5.

Meeting and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
				European Union to the United Nations		

[a] Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, the Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and Ukraine.
[b] Belgium (President of the Security Council) was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence. Niger was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad. Estonia was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.
[c] Guatemala was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Spain was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. The representative of Norway spoke on behalf of the five Nordic countries. The representative of Azerbaijan spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.

Table 2
Videoconferences: Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
12 August 2020	S/2020/799	Letter dated 14 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
3 November 2020	S/2020/1090	Letter dated 5 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
21 December 2020	S/2020/1273	Letter dated 21 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2558 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/1269 (Record of written procedure)

34. Threats to international peace and security

During the period under review, the Security Council held no meetings in connection with the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security". Council members did, however, hold three videoconferences in 2020 in connection with this item.[927] More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below. In addition, the Council adopted resolution 2544 (2020) in connection with this item, extending the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh / Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) established pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017) until 18 September 2021.[928]

In 2020, in connection with this item, Council members were briefed on the progress in the work of UNITAD. In this regard, the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team briefed the members of the Council twice on the activities of UNITAD. In the videoconference held on 15 June 2020, he presented the fourth report[929] on its activities and informed the Council about the significant progress made in the identification and collection of new sources of evidentiary material which, if fully harnessed, had the potential to mark a paradigm shift in the prosecution of ISIL members for the crimes they had committed in Iraq.[930] The Special Adviser noted that the Investigative Team had moved forward a number of its lines of investigation into a phase of evidence consolidation and legal analysis. He further provided Council members with updates on the progress made in the investigation of crimes in the areas of Mosul, Sinjar and Tikrit, noting the cooperation with the Iraqi and Kurdistan Regional Government authorities. Further to the fifth report of the Investigative Team,[931] on 10 December 2020, Council members held another videoconference in which the Special Adviser presented the innovative solutions

[927] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[928] Resolution 2544 (2020), para. 2. For further details on the establishment of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh / Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, see *Repertoire*, Supplement 2016-2017.
[929] See S/2020/386.
[930] See S/2020/547.
[931] See S/2020/1107.

that the Investigative Team had developed to confront the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, including the use of remote interviews and submission of evidence through a new online portal.[932] The Special Adviser stated that the provision of meaningful support by UNITAD to Iraqi investigative judges represented an important moment in the implementation of its mandate, adding that with the potential adoption of legislation in Iraq allowing for the prosecution of international crimes, it was possible to begin to see a clear path towards the fulfilment of the promise made by the Council to survivors and impacted communities through resolution 2379 (2017). The Special Adviser also underlined the partnerships built by the Investigative Team with non-governmental organizations and with the religious leadership of Iraq. Concluding his briefing, the Special Adviser noted that the Investigative Team would continue to rely on the unanimous support of the Council members. Following the briefing, several Council members expressed their full support for the work of UNITAD,[933] with some focusing on the importance of cooperation with a range of local actors, including civil society.[934] Other Council members noted the importance of respecting the sovereignty and jurisdiction of Iraq over crimes committed on its territory and called on UNITAD to maintain its impartiality and discharge its duties in line with its mandate.[935]

On 18 September 2020, further to the request of the Government of Iraq,[936] the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2544 (2020), extending the mandate of the Special Adviser and the Investigative Team until 18 September 2021.[937] By the resolution, the Council also requested the Special Adviser to continue to submit and present reports to the Council on the team's activities every 180 days.[938]

Videoconferences: Threats to international peace and security

[932] See S/2020/1193.
[933] Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Niger, United Kingdom and United States.
[934] Ibid., Germany, Indonesia and South Africa.
[935] Ibid., China, Russian Federation, Tunisia and Viet Nam.
[936] See S/2020/909.
[937] Resolution 2544 (2020), para. 2.
[938] Ibid., para. 4. For further details, see part IX, sect. III.

Videoconference data	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
15 June 2020	S/2020/547	Letter dated 17 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
18 September 2020	S/2020/917	Letter dated 18 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2544 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/920 (Record of written procedure)
10 December 2020	S/2020/1193	Letter dated 18 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

35. Maintenance of international peace and security

During the period under review, the Security Council held three meetings in connection with the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". Of the three meetings one was a high-level open debate and two were convened to adopt decisions.[939] The Council adopted four resolutions, one of them under Chapter VII of the Charter and issued one presidential statement. More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held nine videoconferences in connection with this item. More information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below. In addition to meetings and videoconferences, Council members also held informal consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences in connection with this item.[940]

As in previous periods, a broad range of new and existing sub-items of both a thematic as well as a regional nature were discussed in connection with this item.[941] The thematic sub-items were: (i) Upholding the United Nations Charter; (ii) Implications of COVID-19; (iii) Youth, peace and security; (iv) Climate and security; (v) Humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security; (vi) Global governance after COVID-19 and (vii) Security-sector reform. The region-specific sub-items were: (i) Comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf region and (ii) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) relating to the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya.

On 9 January 2020, at the initiative of Vietnam which held the Presidency for the month,[942] the Council held a high-level open debate marking the 75th anniversary of the United Nations on the subject "Upholding the United Nations Charter". The meeting was resumed twice and was held over a period of three days, on 9, 10 and 13 January 2020.[943] At the meeting, the

[939] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
[940] See A/75/2, part II, chap. 35.
[941] For more information on new sub-items, see part II, sect. III.A.
[942] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 31 December 2019 (S/2020/1).
[943] This was due to the financial difficulties faced by the United Nations, which resulted in meetings of the Security Council being restricted to take place only from 10 am to 1 pm and from 3 pm to 6 pm.

Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Elders, Mrs. Mary Robinson.[944]

The Secretary-General noted that the New Year had begun with fresh turmoil and long-standing suffering. He mentioned that geopolitical tensions had reached dangerous levels, most recently in the Gulf. Against this backdrop, he emphasized that the Charter remained the shared framework of international cooperation for the common good, which also served as a reminder of the primacy of the rule of law and human dignity. He reminded Council members that the privilege of United Nations membership carried vital responsibilities to uphold the Charter's tenets and values, particularly in preventing and addressing conflict.

The Chair of the Elders said that the world was facing two distinct existential threats, namely, nuclear proliferation and the climate crisis. Although responding to those threats was critical, it was harder to implement at a time when multilateral cooperation was being undermined by populism and nationalism. Echoing the Secretary-General, she recalled that Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations required parties to any dispute that threatened international peace and security to negotiate or use other peaceful means to resolve their conflict. With reference to the tensions between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, she explained that dialogue and negotiations were urgently needed, and urged Member States participating in the meeting to consider what the United Nations could do to bring them to the table in the spirit of the Charter.

Following the briefings, Council Members and other participants reaffirmed the importance of multilateralism and the need to uphold and respect the purposes and principles of the Charter. The need for the Council to address emerging as well as new threats and the use of force in line with the Charter of the United Nations was also discussed during the meeting. Many speakers emphasized the primary responsibility of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, the need for States to make maximum use of the tools available to them under the Charter, especially in the areas of conflict prevention and the peaceful

[944] See S/PV.8699.

settlement of international disputes, including the role of regional organizations or agencies to address matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.[945]

On 27 April 2020, at the initiative of the Dominican Republic which held the Presidency for the month,[946] Council members held a videoconference in connection with this item, under the theme youth, peace and security and specifically entitled "Towards the fifth anniversary of the youth and peace and security agenda: accelerating implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018)".[947] At the videoconference, the members of the Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth, as well as Ms. Olla Al-Sakkaf, Project Coordinator for Youth Without Borders Organization for Development, Yemen, and Mr. Gatwal Augustine Gatkuoth, Founder of the Young Adult Empowerment Initiative, South Sudan/Uganda. At the videoconference, the Secretary-General presented his first report on youth, peace and security,[948] and noted that since the issuance of the report, the COVID-19 pandemic had acutely impacted young people, notably, from lost jobs to family stress, mental health and other hardships. More than 1.54 billion children and youth were out of school. Young refugees, displaced persons and others caught up in conflict or disaster now faced even more vulnerability. He added that despite the challenges facing young people, they were still finding ways to engage, to support each other and to demand and drive change on issues such as the battle against COVID-19, supporting the call for a global ceasefire, as well as the battle against climate change. He called on Member States to address those challenges by investing in young people's participation, organizations and initiatives, including strengthening human rights protections and protecting the civic space on which youth participation depended.[949]

The Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth dedicated her statement to all the young people who were putting their communities ahead of themselves in war zones, refugee camps, favelas and settlements. Noting that the year 2020 marked the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the resolution 2250 (2015), she considered it an opportune moment to take stock of the youth, peace

[945] For further details on the discussion, see part III, sect. I and II; part V, sect. I; part VI, sect. IV; part VII, sect. I and part VIII, sect. I.
[946] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 13 April 2020 (S/2020/302).
[947] See S/2020/346.
[948] S/2020/167.
[949] See S/2020/346.

and security agenda, its progress and successes, as well as addressing its challenges and gaps. She recommended regular and systematic reporting to the Council on the implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018), and to put young people at the heart of the Council's efforts to bring about global peace and security.

In their statements, Council members welcomed the Secretary-General's report and took note of his recommendations for the meaningful participation of young people in peace and security efforts. Many Member States emphasized the core challenges that could have a devastating impact on youth development especially the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They called for inclusive, strategic actions and funding for programming and institutional support to further accelerate the youth, peace and security agenda.

On 2 July 2020, at the initiative of Germany which held the Presidency for the month,[950] the Council held a videoconference under the sub-item, "Implications of COVID-19".[951] At the videoconference, Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the African Union Commissioner for Social Affairs. The Secretary-General said that the COVID-19 pandemic was fast becoming a protection crisis, which continued to profoundly affect peace and security across the globe. He noted that the pandemic had made diplomacy more challenging. It had also highlighted the risks of bioterrorist attacks showing some of the ways in which preparedness might fall short if a disease were to be deliberately manipulated to be more virulent or intentionally released in multiple places at once. He also expressed concern that the pandemic was triggering or exacerbating human rights challenges, noting that populists, nationalists and others who were already seeking to roll back human rights were finding in the pandemic a pretext for repressive measures unrelated to the disease.

The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) stated that the ICRC was seeing first-hand how the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic aftershocks were deepening fragility, spiking humanitarian needs, accentuating the impact of violence and conflict, opening the doors to alarming levels of stigmatization, increasing global poverty,

[950] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 22 June 2020 (S/2020/571).
[951] See S/2020/663.

heightening instability and tensions and reversing hard-won development gains. He said that there were six essential lessons for a pandemic response in humanitarian settings, notably: (i) that international humanitarian law needed to be better respected; (ii) assistance and protection available to all those in need without the threat of politicization or manipulation; (iii) response should go far beyond health needs and mitigate the wider secondary impacts of pandemics; (iv)responses to reach the most vulnerable and marginalized community members; (v) proactively guard against any rollback of civilian protections; and (vi) responses would be effective only if there was community trust and engagement.

Following the briefers, Council members discussed the security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on fragile societies and peace operations. Many speakers maintained that the Council had a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and should address the effects of the pandemic. They stressed the need for a greater role of the Council in addressing the crisis, while calling for global solidarity and cooperation towards a collective responsibility to protect civilians.[952]

On 14 July 2020, the Council held a meeting at which it unanimously adopted resolution 2535 (2020).[953] At the meeting, the representative of the Dominican Republic also spoke on behalf of France, who was a co-penholder of the draft, and noted that the resolution reflected the Council's recognition of and support for the pivotal role that young people played in the maintenance of peace and security. Citing the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the first resolution on youth, peace and security, as well as the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, he emphasized the need to listen to and work with young people who were the missing piece for peace and development. He called for the development of a guide dedicated to the protection of young people, including the appointment of focal points for youth, peace and security both within the United Nations system and in countries and regional organizations. The representative of Niger noted that one in four young people were still affected by violence and conflict despite it being five years after the Council had recognized, for the first time, the specific situation of youth in armed conflict. He added that young people lacked educational and economic

[952] For further details on the discussion, see part V, sect. I and part VII, sect. I.
[953] See S/PV.8748.

opportunities, and their human rights were violated and curtailed, even more so during the global coronavirus disease pandemic. It was therefore crucial that the Council not only recognize the specific situation of young people but also leverage their role in and potential for preventing conflicts, for building peaceful and inclusive societies and for effectively addressing humanitarian needs by strengthening the role of young peacebuilders, engaging youth in humanitarian response, and inviting youth organizations to brief the Council.[954] The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his expectation that future discussions on youth issues should be comprehensive in nature. Regarding youth participation in peace processes, including peace settlements and peacebuilding, he stated that it was important to eliminate obstacles, including by introducing preventive measures with respect to the spread of extremist ideologies and terrorism among young people.

On 24 July 2020, Council members held a videoconference under the theme "Climate and security" at which they were briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas; Colonel Mahamadou Seydou Magagi, Director, Centre National d'Études Stratégiques et de Sécurité; and Ms. Coral Pasisi, Director, Sustainable Pacific Consultancy Niue.[955] The Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas stated that the climate emergency was a danger to peace. Although there was no automatic link between climate change and conflict, he noted that climate change did exacerbate existing risks and created new ones, and that the consequences varied from region to region. To cope with climate change, he stressed the need to leverage new technologies and enhance the analytical capacity to translate long-term climate foresight into actionable, near-term analysis, as well as to strengthen multidimensional partnerships. In his statement, Colonel Magagi addressed the extent to which climate change was impacting the livelihoods of citizens in the Sahel. He examined the broader consequences of climate change on regional security, while highlighting the role of Niger in alleviating climate change. He proposed that the United Nations should conduct an integrated climate security assessment before assisting countries, including assisting in building national-to-local capabilities to monitor and manage climate change effects, as well as task United Nations

[954] Ibid., The representative of Niger delivered his statement on behalf of Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, Viet Nam and the Niger.
[955] See S/2020/751.

country teams that were in contact with relevant Government bodies to collect authoritative information on the impact of climate-related security risks in conflict settings and make those results available to the States Members of the United Nations. Ms. Pasisi highlighted the effects of climate change on the Pacific small island developing States (SIDS). She called on the Council to continue to build on and integrate the best available science, modelling and risk assessments into its work and to coordinate with the many existing efforts already under way across the development, climate change and humanitarian bodies of practice.

Many Council members and other Member States emphasized that the Council must work within its mandate to address the impact of climate change on the situations on its agenda, including through regular reporting, while other speakers cautioned against it.[956] Several speakers also called for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Climate and Security.[957]

On 9 September 2020, at the initiative of Niger which held the Presidency for the month, Council members held a videoconference at which they were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.[958] In her briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs highlighted three heightened risks, namely, the erosion of trust in public institutions, the aggravation of certain human rights challenges during the pandemic, and the risk to political and peace processes. She also acknowledged that contrary to expectations, a significant change in the dynamics of a number of ongoing armed conflicts as a result of COVID-19 had not been observed. She also provided an update on the status of the Secretary-General's call on 23 March 2020 for a global ceasefire, noting that the initial response was encouraging with a number of temporary truces announced but that many had expired without extensions, resulting in little improvement on the ground. She also noted that special representatives, envoys and mediators had stepped up efforts to advance political and peace discussions in a number of regions and addressed how operations had been adapted in the midst

[956] For further details on the discussion, see part V, sect. I.
[957] Ibid., Germany, Estonia, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines Ireland, Fiji, Nauru, Spain and Tuvalu.
[958] See S/2020/897.

of the pandemic. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations provided an update on the measures taken to address the enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to peacekeeping operations and to the countries where they were deployed. He stated that with the unified and consistent backing of the Council, peacekeeping operations had quickly and effectively put in place a range of measures that had ensured operational continuity and ongoing mandate implementation across all operations. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator said that there were growing reasons to believe that in the medium and longer term the weakest, most fragile and conflict-affected countries would be those worst affected by COVID-19. He pointed out that beyond the economy, the biggest indirect effect of the virus was on public services, especially health and education, and warned that inadequate economic and political action from the international community could lead to greater instability and conflicts in the coming years and result in more crises on the agenda of the Council. He also addressed the launch of United Nations-coordinated Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 in March 2020 by the Secretary-General describing how it had been used to combat the pandemic.

Council members commended peacekeepers and humanitarian workers assisting in the implementation of the COVID-19 response plans. They emphasized the need for continued support to peacekeeping operations to strengthen their medical capacities to ensure the safety, security, and health of peacekeepers as well as to enable them to fully implement their mandates despite the pandemic. Many speakers referred to resolution 2532 (2020) as a step in the right direction in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on international peace and security and urged all relevant parties to respect the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire.

On 17 September 2020, at the initiative of Niger,[959] Council members held a videoconference in connection with this item and under the sub-item "Humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security", during which they were briefed by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Ms. Inna Modja, Land Ambassador and

[959] See S/2020/929.

environmental activist. [960] The President of the International Committee of the Red Cross called for a more in-depth policy reflections on the links between environmental degradation, climate risk, humanitarian needs, and peace and security. He cited climate shocks as a key issue of concern, alongside poverty and injustice for people affected by conflict and explained the twofold focus of the ICRC to mitigate the impacts of conflict and protect communities from harm as well as to respect the international humanitarian law to enhance the protection of the environment. He noted that the cumulative pressures of conflict, climate change and environmental degradation could affect the survival of communities living in the Sahel and Lake Chad region. He affirmed that peace and security would not be established by focusing on military and security measures to curb conflict and violence. Acknowledging that many would agree in general terms on the linkages between peace, security and the climate and environment, he noted that the "how" of the response still needed more critical analysis and sharing of experiences, adding that the ICRC would welcome regular and systematic discussions on the issue. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stated that an assessment of the root causes of conflicts showed that a large proportion had a link to the environment which might either be due to the abundance of natural resources such as oil, minerals or wildlife, or to scarcity of land, water or vegetation. He cautioned that to prevent conflicts while protecting the planet, the international community ought to first tackle the effects of environment degradation. Ms. Modja emphasized the urgency to find solutions to the consequences of desertification and climate change and the impact that it could have on security and peace.

Following the briefers, speakers addressed a variety of themes, including the effects of the destruction of the natural environment in armed conflict, the humanitarian consequences of climate change and land degradation and how to better adapt and implement the climate mechanisms, international law and policies to contribute to the protection of the environment and natural resources in order to prevent armed conflict. Many speakers called on the Council to act in an integrated and coherent approach in addressing these multidimensional challenges.[961]

[960] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 1 September 2020 (S/2020/882).
[961] For further details on the discussion, see part VIII, sect. I

On 24 September 2020, again at the initiative of Niger, Council members held a videoconference under the sub-item of global governance after COVID-19,[962] and were briefed by the Secretary-General and Chairperson of the African Union Commission.[963] Noting that COVID-19 pandemic was a full-blown crisis unfolding against a backdrop of high geopolitical tensions, the Secretary-General said that the pandemic was a clear test of international cooperation that the international community had failed due to a lack of global preparedness, cooperation, unity and solidarity. As the United Nations marked its 75th anniversary in 2020, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for innovative thinking on global governance and multilateralism fit for the 21st century. He added that the General Assembly Declaration on the Commemoration of the75th anniversary had created space for a process of reflection on the future of multilateral cooperation and the post-COVID world. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission stressed the need for effective global governance and called upon all States to recommit to a collaborative approach to the pandemic response while highlighting the initiatives of the African Union in addressing the crisis including the establishment of an African Special Fund for the COVID-19 response.

Following the briefers, Council members discussed the need for global governance reform to strengthen convergence towards sustainable global peace and security, especially during the pandemic. Several speakers highlighted the challenges faced with the World Health Organization (WHO) while calling for its strengthening to adequately respond to the global pandemic. The representative of the United States stated that the decision of its government to withdraw from WHO was due to its lack of independence, transparency, and accountability. Most speakers expressed their support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire amid the pandemic.

On 20 October 2020, at the initiative of the Russian Federation which held the Presidency for the month,[964] Council members held a videoconference under the sub-item "comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf".[965] Council members heard briefings from the

[962] A concept note was circulated by letter dated 1 September 2020 (S/2020/883).
[963] See S/2020/953.
[964] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 14 October 2020 (S/2020/1013).
[965] See S/2020/1037.

Secretary-General, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group and the President of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Secretary-General stated that given the complex and multifaceted challenges in the Persian Gulf region, it was important to reflect more deeply on how the international community, particularly the Council, could work in unison to promote peace and security in that vital part of the world. Referring to the situation in Yemen, he expressed concern that nearly six years of war had devastated the lives of millions of Yemenis and had undermined confidence-building efforts in the region. He reiterated his appeal for an immediate global ceasefire to focus on the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerning regional stability, the Secretary-General stated that the issue of nuclear nonproliferation was critical, while expressing his support to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), as an important instrument against nuclear proliferation. As the United Nations marked its 75th anniversary, the Secretary-General noted that the Organization would continue its work to help reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf region. The President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group cautioned that conditions for a war that would affect not just the Gulf but the broader Middle East were arguably riper than at any time in recent memory and could break out in any of a number of places. He noted that the aspirations of the people of the Middle East for decent and peaceful lives had been stymied by rivalries and lack of cooperation among their Governments. In his remarks, he addressed some of the causes as well as the possible remedies. Noting the the absence of any institutional mechanism for parties to air their grievances, he affirmed that the Gulf region needed to initiate a collective and inclusive security dialogue encompassing the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, aiming at diminishing tensions. The United Nations, too, could play an important role. Resolution 598 (1987), which ended the Iran-Iraq war, he said, provided a mandate for the Secretary-General to convene a regional security dialogue to lay the groundwork for a security architecture tolerable to all sides. He added that the main threat faced with the region then was not so much a war of choice but an inadvertent one resulting from miscalculation, misinterpretation or lack of timely communication.

In his statement, the President of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences stated that owing to the tremendous geoeconomic and geostrategic significance and openness of the Gulf subregion, tensions were increasing, seriously threatening security, political and economic stability in the subregion. He expressed support for collective, solidarity-based efforts free of confrontational approaches and demonization. It was this approach that was laid down in the concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf proposed by the Russian Federation in 2019, the implementation of which would allow the normalization of the situation in the subregion. In that regard, he recalled that in August, the President of the Russian Federation had put forward a proposal to convene a summit of the five permanent members of the Security Council, with the participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Germany, in order to agree on the parameters of joint efforts aimed at the creation of reliable mechanisms for ensuring security and strengthening confidence-building measures in the Persian Gulf zone. He also mentioned that the issue of confidence-building measures and transparency was key to the initial stage of the process of a rapprochement among the parties.

Further to the briefings, Council members discussed the challenges in the Persian Gulf region, while urging the Council to support regional initiatives. They emphasized the urgent need for peaceful solutions to the crises in Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic and other parts of the Gulf region. The need for a unified approach and multilateral diplomacy to enhance efforts towards building trust and confidence throughout the region was also stressed by Member States. Some participants endorsed the development of a regional security architecture in collaboration with the United Nations and international partners to address the security concerns of all stakeholders.[966] while the representative of the United States noted that the international community did not need yet another mechanism to promote Gulf security.[967]

On 3 December 2020, at the initiative of South Africa which held the Presidency for the month,[968] Council members held a videoconference under the sub-item of security sector reform.[969] Council members were briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa,

[966] Ibid., Viet Nam, Belgium and France.
[967] For further details on the discussion, see part III, sect. II, part VI, sect. IV and part VIII, sect. I.
[968] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 25 November 2020 (S/2020/1145)
[969] See S/2020/1176.

Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, Department of Peace Operations, and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security. In her briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa acknowledged that there was a broad recognition that security sector governance was a key element of United Nations support to national efforts to sustain peace and prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict across the entire peace continuum. Expectations, however, needed to be realistic. She pointed out that security-sector governance and reform was a complex and long-term endeavour, sometimes spanning a generation and requiring a deep understanding of the root causes of a conflict, sustained political will to overcome resistance and the space to implement difficult political decisions. In her statement she put forth three recommendations to the Council and Member States to optimally position the United Nations in advancing nationally-owned and led security sector governance and reform efforts by, firstly, recognizing security-sector governance and reform primarily as political processes and ensuring that peace operation mandates on security sector reform were linked to broader political objectives; secondly, systematically recognizing the coordination role of the United Nations and the necessity of partnerships as means to align international assistance with national security sector priorities; and, thirdly, supporting inclusive security sector reform processes and prioritizing efforts aiming at increasing women's participation in national security services by identifying and addressing systemic barriers to their recruitment, retention and promotion.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions elaborated on the United Nations' role in assisting national authorities in building an effective and accountable security sector. He noted, however, that challenges persisted. United Nations regional offices and special envoys lacked reliable security sector reform capacity, particularly in the context of implementing the Secretary-General's conflict-prevention agenda. The mismatch between financial needs and the resources availed and committed to by donors was a major concern in many countries. Ensuring an effective division of labour and fostering the strategic coherence of international assistance, including in the context of implementing political agreements continued to be a challenge.

The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security briefed on the initiatives of the African Union in assisting Member States to address the challenges in security sector governance and reform. According to him, the African Union Master Roadmap of Practical Steps to Silence the Guns in Africa by the Year 2020 acknowledged that the failure to transform African defence and security forces into professional and disciplined national security institutions subjected to civilian oversight and control had often led to the eruption of, or relapse into conflicts, thus perpetuating cycles of violence and disrupting stabilization and peace-building efforts. He noted that since the adoption of its security sector reform policy framework in 2013, the African Union had continued to deploy efforts to assist Member States in addressing the challenges of security sector governance and reform. He also underlined that the African Union was mindful that the governance of the security sector was a sine qua non for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. However, it was politically complex, long term and often costly and therefore required full engagement by State and non-State stakeholders, with strong national ownership guided by high-level political leadership.

Following the briefings, Council members highlighted their countries' initiatives in the implementation of security sector governance reform. Speakers discussed the linkages between security sector governance and reform and peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including the importance of providing resources and sustainable funding for activities related to security sector reform initiatives. Participants also stressed the role played by the United Nations in improving the effectiveness of peace operations as well as the strengthening of security sector governance and nationally led reform. Many speakers called for inclusive security sector reform processes and prioritization efforts aimed at increasing women's participation in the security services. The representative of South Africa stated that her country had undertaken to update resolution 2151(2014) to make it more relevant, taking into account the evolving situation regarding the realisation of the objectives of security sector governance and reform. The adoption of resolution 2553 (2020) was announced at the same videoconference. In the explanation of the vote on the resolution submitted by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom, he indicated that his delegation welcomed the intent of the penholder to update resolution 2151 (2014) to reflect progress in the development of normative and operational frameworks on

security sector reform. However, while sufficiently content to vote in favour of resolution 2553 (2020), due to the importance of its subject matter, he highlighted some concerns which had led his delegation to qualify the United Kingdom's support. First, he noted that the process of penholding ahead of the resolution's tabling fell far short of the expectations and standards of Council practice. Secondly, he said that for security sector reform to be successful and sustainable, it had to be inclusive and participatory. In that regard, he made clear that the United Kingdom would continue to interpret the content of the resolution as meaning that international security sector reform efforts should be delivered in full accordance with the principles of women's empowerment and gender equality set out in resolution 1325 (2000) and all other relevant resolutions on women and peace and security.

In 2020, the Council adopted four resolutions and issued one presidential statement in connection with this item. The decisions of the Council addressed some of the themes outlined above. In a presidential statement issued on 9 January 2020,[970] on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, including the purposes and principles of the Charter and called on Member States to fully comply with the Charter through mainstreaming the purposes and principles of the Charter into policymaking and implementation mechanisms.[971]. The Council stressed the need for enhanced inclusive dialogue in the interest of all Member States to share different experiences, national best practices and lessons learned in implementing their obligations under the Charter.[972] The Council also reaffirmed its commitment to multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations.[973] While recognizing the United Nations' positive contribution over 75 years to upholding the Charter, the Council underscored the importance of the widest possible dissemination of in-depth knowledge of the Charter and encouraged the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations agencies to incorporate activities to promote the role of the Charter in their programmes to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations.[974] The Council

[970] S/PRST/2020/1.
[971] Ibid., first and fourth paragraphs.
[972] Ibid., fourth paragraph.
[973] Ibid., first paragraph.
[974] Ibid., fifth paragraph.

further underlined the importance of the role of regional and sub-regional organizations and arrangements and of cooperation with them, consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations.[975]

On 1 July 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2532 (2020), recognizing the efforts and measures proposed by the Secretary-General concerning the response to the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to conflict-affected countries, in particular his appeal for an immediate global ceasefire.[976] The Council demanded a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and called upon all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause for at least 90 consecutive days, in order to enable the safe, unhindered and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance, provisions of related services by impartial humanitarian actors, in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and medical evacuations, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law and refugee law as applicable.[977] The Council requested the Secretary-General to (i) help ensure that all relevant parts of the United Nations system, including UN Country Teams, in accordance with their respective mandates, accelerate their response to the COVID-19 pandemic; (ii) provide updates to the Council on the United Nations efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic in countries in situations of armed conflict or affected by humanitarian crises, as well as on the impact of COVID-19 on the ability of peace-keeping operations and Special Political Missions to deliver their mandated priority tasks; and (iii) instruct peace-keeping operations to provide support, within their mandates and capacities, to host country authorities in their efforts to contain the pandemic, in particular to facilitate humanitarian access, including to internally displaced persons and refugee camps and allow for medical evacuations. The Council further requested the Secretary-General and Member States to take all appropriate steps to protect the safety, security and health of all personnel in the United Nations peace operations, while maintaining the

[975] Ibid., sixth paragraph.
[976] Resolution 2532 (2020), eighth preambular paragraph.
[977] Ibid., paras. 1 and 2.

continuity of operations, and to take further steps towards the provision of training for peacekeeping personnel on issues related to preventing the spread of COVID-19.[978]

On 14 July 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2535 (2020), taking note of the first report of the Secretary-General of 2 March 2020 on youth peace and security.[979] By the resolution, the Council called on all relevant actors, to consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth for the prevention and resolution of conflict as well as in peacebuilding and urged Member States to protect youth from violence in armed conflict and to facilitate an inclusive, safe, enabling and gender-responsive environment in which youth actors were recognized and provided with adequate support and protection to implement violence prevention activities and support social cohesion.[980] The Council also stressed the importance of providing opportunities for young people to strengthen resilience against radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment and of creating policies for youth that would positively contribute to peacebuilding efforts.[981] The Council requested the Secretary-General and his Special Envoys to include the views of youth in relevant discussions pertinent to the maintenance of peace and security, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and to facilitate the full, effective and meaningful participation of youth at all decision-making levels. The Council further requested the Secretary-General to provide guidance for all peacekeeping and other relevant United Nations missions on the implementation of the youth, peace and security agenda and to develop a dedicated guidance on the protection of young people. The Secretary-General was also requested to include information and related recommendations on issues of relevance to young people, in the context of armed conflict and to submit a biennial report to the Council on the implementation of the resolution including resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018).[982]

On 2 October 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2546 (2020) renewing the authorizations regarding acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking in Libya's territorial sea as set out in paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 10 of resolution 2240 (2015), for a further

[978] Ibid., paras. 4, 5 and 6.
[979] S/2020/167.
[980] Resolution 2535 (2020), paras. 1, 4 and 5.
[981] Ibid., paras. 7 and 8.
[982] Ibid., paras. 20, 21, 22, 24 and 26.

period of twelve months.[983] It further renewed the reporting requests set out in paragraph 17 of its resolution 2240 (2015) and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council eleven months after the adoption of the resolution on its implementation, in particular with regard to the implementation of paragraphs 7 to 10 of its resolution 2240 (2015).[984]

On 3 December 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2553 (2020), reaffirming the importance of security sector reform in peacebuilding, and sustaining peace, including conflict prevention and in the stabilization and reconstruction of States in the aftermath of conflict.[985] The Council also stressed the importance of the relevant bodies of the United Nations undertaking mission planning processes for security sector reform and underlined that the management of a transition from a peacekeeping operation or special political mission in relation to its security sector reform activities should be based upon a timely analysis, in consultation with the host country, and in close coordination with the United Nations Country Team.[986] The Council resolved to continue to promote the role of the United Nations Secretariat in supporting security sector reform, and requested the Secretary-General to consider undertaking a number of tasks in the context of relevant country-specific mandates, including strengthening the comprehensive, integrated, and coherent approach of the United Nations in security sector reform.[987] In that regard, the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on his efforts to strengthen the United Nations comprehensive approach to security sector reform in September 2021.[988]

Table 1
Meetings: Maintenance of international peace and security

[983] Resolution 2546 (2020), para. 2. For more information on the situation in Libya, see part I, sect. 11. For further details on the authorization, see part VII, sect. IV.
[984] Resolution 2546 (2020), para. 3.
[985] Resolution 2553 (2020), para. 1.
[986] Ibid., paras. 12 and 14
[987] Ibid., para. 20.
[988] Ibid., para. 25.

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8699 S/PV.8699 (Resumption 1) S/PV.8699 (Resumption 2) 9, 10 and 13 January 2020	Upholding the United Nations Charter Letter dated 31 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/1)		94 Member States[a]	Secretary-General; Chair of the Elders; Head of Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations; Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations; Permanent Observer of the Observer State of Palestine	All Council members[b], 92 Member States[c,d], all other invitees	S/PRST/2020/1
S/PV.8748 14 July 2020		Draft resolution submitted by 84 Member States[e] (S/2020/680)	70 Member States [f]		Dominican Republic,[g] Niger, Russian Federation	Resolution 2535 (2020) 15-0-0
S/PV.8763 2 October 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) (S/2020/876)	Draft resolution submitted by 27 Member States[h] (S/2020/957)	23 Member States[i]			Resolution 2546 (2020) 15-0-0 Chapter VII

[a] Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)and Yemen.

[b] Vietnam was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was represented by its Prime Minister; Estonia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Germany was represented by its Minister of State in the Federal Foreign Office

[c] Hungary was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade; Timor-Leste was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; Nicaragua was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Haiti was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship; Ukraine was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; Kenya was represented by its Diplomatic and Political Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs; Thailand was represented by its Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs

[d] Philippines spoke on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, The Head of Delegation of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and North Macedonia. Norway spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden. Azerbaijan spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. Ukraine also spoke on behalf of Canada, Germany, and Sweden.

[e] Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium. Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya,

Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

[f] Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, 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, 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.

[g] The representative of Dominican Republic spoke on behalf of France. The representative of Niger spoke on behalf of Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

[h] Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden.

[i] Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Table 2
Videoconferences: Maintenance of international peace and security

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
27 April 2020	S/2020/346	Letter dated 29 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
1 July 2020	S/2020/632	Letter dated 2 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2532 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/638 (Record of written procedure)
2 July 2020	S/2020/663	Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
24 July 2020	S/2020/751	Letter dated 28 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
9 September 2020	S/2020/897	Letter dated 11 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
17 September 2020	S/2020/929	Letter dated 21 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
24 September 2020	S/2020/953	Letter dated 28 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
20 October 2020	S/2020/1037	Letter dated 22 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
3 December 2020	S/2020/1176	Letter dated 8 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2553 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/1167 (Record of written procedure)

36. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security" which took the form of a briefing.[989] Council members also held three open videoconferences in connection with this item.[990] More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is given in table 1 below. Additional information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below. The Council also issued two presidential statements in connection with this item.

On 30 January 2020, at the initiative of Viet Nam which held the Presidency for the month,[991] the Council held a meeting focused on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).[992] At the meeting, the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of ASEAN briefed the Council. In his remarks, the Secretary-General noted that since the formalization of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the United Nations and ASEAN in 2011, the two organizations were today focusing on how to strengthen their cooperation in addressing threats to peace and security. Looking ahead, he said that there were multiple potential areas of practical cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations in the areas of peace and security. In this regard, he highlighted the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations on peacekeeping, implementing the women and peace and security agenda, the youth and peace and security agenda, human rights and counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism, as well as on addressing cross-border security threats and transnational organized crime, and exploring early-warning arrangements and threat analysis. With regard to the climate crisis and natural disaster management, he suggested strengthening the ties with ASEAN nations to strengthen adaptation and build resilience to

[989] For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.
[990] For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
[991] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 9 January 2020 (S/2020/30).
[992] See S/PV.8711.

disasters and to forge strategic synergies, collaborations and paths forward for future work.[993] In his intervention, the Secretary-General of ASEAN touched upon two matters, namely ASEAN's contributions to peace, security and prosperity, and ASEAN's relations with its external partners, including the United Nations. On the former, he spoke about a number of areas such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, by which ASEAN member States committed to maintaining peaceful relationships with one another, guided by the principles of mutual respect, non-interference in each other's internal affairs and the peaceful settlement of disputes. He also highlighted the unique contribution of ASEAN to nurturing a conducive environment for peace and stability including its ability to initiate and be the driving force on regional mechanisms and frameworks for promoting dialogue, cooperation and confidence-building, bringing together not only its member States but also external partners, including key players in the region and major global powers. On ASEAN's relation with the United Nations, he noted that tangible results had been achieved since the five-year Plan of Action to implement the Joint Declaration was put in place in 2016 which he deemed a testament to the commitment of the two organizations in sustaining a comprehensive partnership. He also looked forward to commencing work on crafting the next plan of action of the ASEAN-United Nations comprehensive partnership for the period 2021-2025. In closing, he said that the 75th anniversary of the United Nations provided an opportune time for the States Members of the United Nations, including ASEAN countries, to work closely together towards the strengthening of the United Nations.

Following the briefings, Council members recognized the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations under Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, with some urging a greater reflection on such issues as how to strengthen coordination and coherence between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations regarding peace and security matters.[994] Several Council members also discussed specific situations in the South East Asia region, such as the situation in the South China Sea, and the Rohingya refugees in Myanmar, including the judicial proceedings initiated at the

[993] Ibid.
[994] For further details on the discussion, see part VIII, sect. I.B.

International Court of Justice by the Gambia against Myanmar. Council members also acknowledged the role played by ASEAN in conflict prevention, resolution and management as well as in the area of peacekeeping and praised the progress achieved in relation to the women and peace and security agenda. Council members also highlighted areas where the two organizations could further cooperate such as on the fight against terrorism and organized crime and climate change. In closing, the representative of Viet Nam expressed the hope that the momentum created by the meeting would be carried into the future to forge a more robust cooperation between the United Nations and ASEAN.[995]

On 28 May 2020, Council members held an open videoconference in connection with this item focused on the cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union. At the videoconference, Council members were briefed by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.[996] In his intervention, the High Representative outlined areas of action of the European Union on matters of international peace and security, particularly in the Sahel, Libya, as well as the Middle East and Europe. He also informed Council members regarding the launch of the European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI with the core task of implementing the United Nations arms embargo on Libya. The High Representative further noted that the COVID-19 pandemic risked unravelling the progress in recent years towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, and that it could exacerbate existing conflicts and generate new geopolitical tensions. He closed his briefing with some broader strategic reflections on the need to recommit to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and to support putting the climate and security nexus on the Council's agenda.[997]

In their statements, Council members addressed and highlighted some of the main contributions of the European Union to international peace and security, including on peacekeeping, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, human rights, and humanitarian assistance. In addition, some Council members made reference to the launch of the European

[995] See S/PV.8711.
[996] See S/2020/489.
[997] Ibid.

Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI.[998] A number of Council members also reaffirmed their commitment and expressed support to deepening international cooperation in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.[999]

On 8 September 2020, at the initiative of Niger which held the Presidency for the month,[1000] Council members held a videoconference in connection with this item focused on the role of the International Organization of la Francophonie.[1001] Council members were briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, the Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia, in his capacity as Chair of the Ministerial Conference of the International Organization of la Francophonie. In her briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General noted that it was a particularly opportune time to look at the partnership between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie at their 75th and 50th anniversaries respectively. She also noted that the two organizations were currently cooperating to promote international peace and security, sustainable development, good governance, democracy, rule of law, human rights, and the inclusion of women and youth. In her briefing, she highlighted the cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie in the areas of early warning and conflict prevention, electoral assistance and observation of electoral processes, as well as in the areas of peacekeeping operations and peacebuilding.[1002] The Secretary-General of the International Organization of la Francophonie highlighted the organization's three main areas of action in support of international peace and security, namely peacekeeping, crisis prevention and management, and supporting democratic processes of its Member States. She further reported about the launch, on 25 September 2019, of a francophone platform in the Council to provide a framework for regular dialogue on international peace and security issues, with a view to amplifying the francophone voice in the Council as well as to develop convergences between francophones on issues on the

[998] Ibid., Belgium, France, Niger, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States.
[999] Ibid., China, France, Niger (also on behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom and United States.
[1000] A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 1 September 2020 (S/2020/880).
[1001] See S/2020/893.
[1002] Ibid.

Council's agenda, and to continue the organization's actions to promote the French language and linguistic diversity in the work of the Council. In his briefing, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Armenia focused on the cooperation between the United Nations and the International Organization of la Francophonie and noted that at a time when the negative consequences of the COVID-19 crisis were likely to weigh particularly heavily on developing countries and on the most vulnerable people, the two organizations needed to strongly affirm their willingness to promote peace, cooperation, solidarity and the values of living together in harmony. He added that it was in that regard that the International Organization of la Francophonie strongly supported the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire and Council resolution 2532 (2020).

Following the briefings, Members States praised the work of the International Organization of la Francophonie in promoting democracy, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women. In addition, some speakers noted that many peacekeeping operations took place in French-speaking countries and in this regard, the representative of France argued that proficiency in French was a guarantee of effectiveness and needed therefore to be a precondition for deployment, while other speakers noted that multilingualism and communicating in French with local actors and civilians promoted increased confidence in the personnel of United Nations missions and builds trust, better understanding and engagement with the local community.[1003]

On 4 December 2020, Council members held a high-level open videoconference in connection with this item and focused on the cooperation with the African Union. At the videoconference, Council members were briefed by the Secretary-General as well as by the Chairperson of the African Union Commission.[1004] The Secretary-General stated that cooperation between the United Nations, the African Union and the African regional economic communities and other regional mechanisms had gained in depth and scope, particularly since the 2017 signing of the Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and, in 2018, the African Union-United Nations Framework

[1003] Ibid., Dominican Republic, Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, Viet Nam, Côte d'Ivoire, Ireland, Romania, and Senegal.
[1004] See S/2020/1179.

for the implementation of Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. He added that African Heads of State and Government had presented a compelling vision for peace and security through the flagship initiative of Silencing the Guns in Africa and the Lusaka Master Roadmap 2016. In this regard, he elaborated on the several ways in which the United Nations had sought to support these initiatives, including through technical assistance to mediation and disarmament capacities, partnering with the African Union to create the African Women Leaders Network and investment in youth-empowerment activities. The Secretary-General also highlighted other areas of cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union, and signalled that their action in Africa would benefit from a number of concrete steps, namely, the further institutionalization of the cooperation at every level, which would also require a stronger collaboration between the Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, and ensuring the predictability of financing African Union peace support operations through assessed contributions and doing much more to involve and engage women and young people in the peace and security agenda.[1005]

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission stated that cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union was not only a necessity for both organizations but a prerequisite for the implementation of their mandates of promoting and upholding international peace and security and also supported predictable, sustainable and flexible financing for African Union-led or African Union-authorized peace support operations, based on the principle of the use of United Nations assessed contributions. He also stated that the annual consultative meetings between the Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council since 2007 had been key in strengthening Council-to-Council engagement, and noted that the two organizations had also increased operational cooperation and coordination by working hand in hand to support peace processes. Several Council members called for deeper cooperation between the Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council,[1006] and others expressed support for United Nations-assessed contributions to African Union-led peace support operations.[1007]

[1005] Ibid.
[1006] Ibid., South Africa, Niger, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium, Germany, Indonesia, and Dominican Republic.
[1007] Ibid., South Africa, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and United Kingdom.

On 4 December 2020, the Council also issued two presidential statements in connection with this item which were announced simultaneously at an open videoconference. In the first of the two presidential statements issued that day (S/PRST/2020/11), the Council commended the increasing contribution of the African Union to the maintenance of peace and security and expressed its willingness to continue its cooperation and collaboration with the African Union Peace and Security Council on issues of peace and security in Africa.[1008] It also recognised that since the strengthening of the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union, significant gains had been made in finding sustainable solutions to African armed conflicts and moving the continent onto a path towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.[1009] In the statement, the Council further continued to encourage the United Nations and the African Union to strengthen their efforts to coordinate their engagement in a mutually supportive manner, across the range of possible responses to conflict in line with their Joint Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and, also, emphasized the need for joint action between the two organizations to end sexual violence in armed conflict and post-conflict situations.[1010] The Council also acknowledged the need for more support to enhance African Union peace operations and encouraged further dialogue between the United Nations and the African Union to achieve this.[1011]

In the second of the two presidential statements issued on 4 December 2020 (S/PRST/2020/12), the Council took note of the improved security situation in Burundi and of the six principal priorities presented by President Ndayishimiye for his Government in his inauguration speech on 18 June 2020, following the broadly peaceful elections.[1012] The Council also called upon the United Nations, the African Union, the East African Community, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and the Guarantors of the 2000 Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi to coordinate their efforts in assisting Burundian stakeholders in the implementation of the Arusha Agreement, which had helped to

[1008] S/PRST/2020/11, sixth and fifteenth paragraphs.
[1009] Ibid., fifth paragraph.
[1010] Ibid., eleventh and eighteenth paragraphs.
[1011] Ibid., tenth paragraph.
[1012] S/PRST/2020/12, first paragraph.

sustain a decade of peace in Burundi.[1013] Finally, noting that the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General to Burundi had completed his assignment on 30 November 2019, the Council requested the Secretary-General to cease periodic reporting on the situation in that country and looked forward to the Secretary-General covering the situation in Burundi as part of his regular reporting on the Great Lakes region and Central Africa.[1014]

Table 1
Meetings: Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations

Meeting record and date	*Sub-item*	*Other documents*	*Rule 37 invitations*	*Rule 39 and other invitations*	*Speakers*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)*
S/PV.8711 30 January 2020	Cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Letter dated 9 January 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/30)			Secretary-General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations	Secretary-General, 13 Council members[a], invitee	

[a] Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger and South Africa), United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.

Table 2
Videoconference: Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
28 May 2020	S/2020/489	Letter dated 2 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

[1013] Ibid., fifth paragraph.
[1014] Ibid., sixth paragraph. See for further information on the Great Lakes region, part I, sect. 3. See also part IX, sect. VI for further information on Special Advisers, Envoys and Representatives.

Videoconference date	*Videoconference record*	*Title*	*Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure*
8 September 2020	S/2020/893	Letter dated 10 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the Security Council	
4 December 2020	S/2020/1179	Letter dated 8 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the Security Council	S/PRST/2020/11 S/PRST/2020/12