

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.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

In 2020, the members of the Council held two open videoconferences and adopted one resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter in connection with the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁷⁷ 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 and Serbia, as well as the representative of the European Union. At the first open videoconference of the year, Council members 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 on the basis of his two reports for the year.⁴⁷⁸ On 6 May,⁴⁷⁹ 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. The authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina had so far failed to reach a political agreement on the distribution of financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund and the greatest challenge for the country was to minimize the risk of corruption related to the management of international financial and material assistance. The High Representative 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 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 Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had not yet been appointed owing 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, owing to the lack of funding, pandemic restrictions and the refusal by some political parties to cooperate with the Commission. The ruling of the European Court of

⁴⁷⁷ For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁴⁷⁸ See [S/2020/345](#) and [S/2020/1052](#).

⁴⁷⁹ See [S/2020/379](#).

Human Rights in the case of *Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 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 twenty-fifth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, he called for legally regulating the issue of genocide denial and holocaust denial. He also made reference to the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Council resolution 1325 (2000) and called on the authorities to do more to address gender inequality. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina in November 2020, he called for the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, together with the international community, to recommit to preserving the structure agreed at Dayton through strengthening the State-level institutions and the competences they had assumed.

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 Peace Agreement the conflict had been transferred onto the political stage and that the lack of investment in the development of the country and its 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 Peace Agreement.

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 reconciliation in the country. Regarding institutional reforms, Council members stressed the need for their implementation on 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 2008.⁴⁸⁰

Several speakers also shared the High Representative's concerns with regard to the blocking of decision-making at the State level by some parties of the governing coalition.⁴⁸¹ Looking ahead to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide in

July 2020, a number of speakers expressed concern about the denial of genocide.⁴⁸² In that 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 owing 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 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,⁴⁸³ the High Representative reflected on the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement, arguing that while it had been a solid framework for the 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 expressed his regret at the continuous divisive rhetoric and lack of implementation of reforms, as well as the blockages of institutions at the State and Federation levels. The High Representative also noted the adoption in September 2020 of the Revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy 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 result in the success of the new strategy. In the context of the local elections that had been rescheduled to take place in mid-November 2020, the High Representative expressed concern about 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 to and support for the Central Election Commission for having organized the elections under extraordinary circumstances, as well as for preparing for the local elections in the City of Mostar on 20 December 2020, the first such elections

⁴⁸⁰ Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Niger, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, Croatia and European Union.

⁴⁸¹ Estonia, France, Indonesia and United Kingdom.

⁴⁸² Belgium, Estonia, France, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and European Union.

⁴⁸³ See [S/2020/1103](#).

in the city since 2008. Finally, the High Representative expressed his regret that besides the adoption of the Revised National 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 for the period 2018–2022 on the implementation of Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) and indicated his regret that while women were at the core of ensuring socioeconomic stability in the country, they were marginalized in political decision-making.

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 engaging in the continuing divisive rhetoric.⁴⁸⁴ Several Council members also continued to condemn the glorification of war criminals and denial of genocide.⁴⁸⁵ In that connection, some delegations welcomed the adoption of the Revised National War Crimes Processing Strategy, stressing the need for its implementation.⁴⁸⁶ Marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Dayton Agreement, a number of delegations

reflected on the achievements and remaining challenges for peace and reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁴⁸⁷ The representative of the Russian Federation again expressed regret that the briefing by the High Representative painted a subjective picture of the situation in Bosnia and 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.

Also on 5 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2549 \(2020\)](#) under Chapter VII of the Charter. By the resolution, the Council renewed the authorization of 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 the resolution.⁴⁸⁸ The Council also urged the parties to proceed with the formation of the governments at the Federation and cantonal levels and to prioritize the implementation of comprehensive reforms in a manner that benefited all citizens and called on the parties to refrain from any polarizing unconstructive policy, action and rhetoric.⁴⁸⁹

⁴⁸⁴ Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Serbia.

⁴⁸⁵ Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.

⁴⁸⁶ Belgium, Estonia, South Africa and European Union.

⁴⁸⁷ Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and European Union.

⁴⁸⁸ Resolution [2549 \(2020\)](#), paras. 3 and 4. For more information, see part VIII, sect. III.

⁴⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, paras. 8 and 9.

Videoconferences: the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
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