

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 22 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative
of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations
addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith a report on the work of the Security Council in February 2016 during the presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (see annex). The report was prepared under my supervision, following consultation with the other members of the Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Rafael **Ramírez**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the
Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 22 December 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (February 2016)

Introduction

During the month of February 2016, the Security Council held 21 open meetings and 18 closed consultations, 14 of them under the item entitled “Other matters”. The Council adopted six resolutions and issued one presidential statement and seven statements to the press. The Council held a debate entitled “Working methods of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council”, an open debate entitled “Respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as a key element for the maintenance of international peace and security” and an open debate entitled “Post-conflict peacebuilding: review of the peacebuilding architecture”.

In accordance with Organization practice, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela began its presidency with the presentation of a programme of work on the first day of the month, which was well received by the members of the Security Council and adopted in a closed meeting.

Middle East

Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 5 February, at the request of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” to hear a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Miroslav Jenča, on recent developments, specifically Israeli settlement activity and home demolitions affecting Palestinians. In his briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General reported that the number of demolitions in 2016 had already reached more than 25 per cent of the total number of demolitions for 2015, displacing hundreds of people in the occupied Palestinian territories. He also elaborated on recent violence affecting both sides.

Members of the Council condemned violent incidents regardless of the perpetrator. They also noted with concern that the expansion of settlements rendered the implementation of a two-State solution increasingly difficult, and that the status quo was not sustainable or conducive to creating a climate in which meaningful talks might resume. Members of the Council expressed support for the efforts of the Quartet. One delegation circulated a draft press statement, but failed to gather a consensus.

On 16 February, at the request of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the Council held closed consultations to hear a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman, on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General noted that the general trend on the ground remained unchanged since the briefing on 5 February,

and that violent incidents continued to take place at a worrying rate. He reported on the recent Israeli intensification of settlement activity, including the demolition of Palestinian structures, and elaborated on recent acts of violence. Noting rising tensions on the ground, he appealed to members of the Council to work together to ease the climate of confrontation between the parties. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized that those trends posed a threat to the achievement of a two-State solution.

Members of the Council once again condemned the violence regardless of the perpetrator. Some advocated analysing various concrete proposals related to protection mechanisms for Palestinian civilians, while others were not in favour.

On 18 February, the Council held an open meeting, followed by closed consultations, to discuss the issue of the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. During the consultations, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, delivered a briefing, in keeping with the terms of resolution [1322 \(2000\)](#), on the latest developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. He reported that the increasing spiral of violence had resulted in the deaths of 137 Palestinians and 19 Israelis since the beginning of 2016, adding that the only possible solution to the current situation was a political one.

The Special Coordinator said that, in the past year, the four members of the Quartet (the Russian Federation, the United States of America, the European Union and the United Nations) had actively worked to break the impasse in the peace talks, travelling to the region and meeting with Palestinian and Israeli leaders, as well as with authorities in Egypt, Jordan, Norway and Saudi Arabia. He clarified, however, that those efforts would not be successful if the Israeli and Palestinian authorities did not show the necessary political will to address the chronic threats that jeopardized the two-State solution. In closing, he stated that the conflict had reached a decisive moment, and that Israelis and Palestinians must actively address the peace process, with the dedicated support of the international community.

The members of the Council agreed on the need to reactivate the available mechanisms to bring both Palestinians and Israelis to the table to achieve a two-State solution. They called for efforts to reduce tension and address the underlying causes of the conflict. France expressed its intention to work on calling an international conference. Some members of the Council reiterated the need to establish an international protection system for Palestinian civilians. One delegation proposed elements for the press, but once again no consensus emerged.

On 25 February, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters”, at the request of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, to hear a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O’Brien, on the humanitarian situation facing Palestinians, in particular the situation of children. The Under-Secretary-General stated that it was the first time he had been requested to report to the Council on that issue, and that humanitarian issues in the occupied Palestinian territories were tied to the impact of the Israeli occupation. He said that the needs of Palestinians in Gaza were of particular concern and noted that a child of 8 years in Gaza would have witnessed three conflicts during her lifetime. He noted that the security concerns of Israel, including the importation of dual-use materials, had an impact on whether or not items could enter Gaza. In that regard, he also pressed for a

continued opening to the Rafah crossing while taking into consideration the security concerns of Egypt. He pointed out the devastating impact on children, noting that Israeli prisons held hundreds of minors, many under administrative detention, and many of whom were being tried in military courts.

The Under-Secretary-General also described the resilience of the Palestinian people, who found it virtually impossible to obtain building permits and faced displacement from their homes and livelihoods due to the demolition of homes, the appropriation of Palestinian lands and the establishment of settlements. With regard to the situation in Gaza, he proposed establishing a target of increasing humanitarian assistance. He noted that the current situation took a toll on Palestinians and on Israelis, and that each group deserved better.

The members of the Council took note of the briefing. Some delegations condemned the widespread and systematic Israeli violations endured by the Palestinian people, in particular women and children. Several delegations criticized the failure of Israel to comply with the relevant resolutions of the Council regarding the protection of the Palestinian people. Some delegations expressed their support for concrete measures to ensure the protection of Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories. One member of the Council noted that the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East remained underfunded and suggested that those interested in helping Palestinians, in particular those in Gaza, contribute to that Agency. Another member put forward the possibility of using humanitarian aid agencies of the United Nations system that were already established in the area, so that they might, within their remits, help to protect the Palestinian people, in particular their children.

One delegation emphasized the importance of financial support in reviving the Palestinian economy. Members of the Council condemned violent incidents and incitement to violence regardless of its origin or perpetrator.

Iraq

On 16 February, the Council held a briefing, following by closed consultations, on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The Council heard from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and the Head of Mission of UNAMI, Ján Kubiš, who, in accordance with resolution [2233 \(2015\)](#), presented the quarterly report for October 2015 to January 2016 ([S/2016/77](#)). In his briefing, the Special Representative emphasized that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) constituted an unprecedented global threat to international peace and security. In that regard, he added that the fight against ISIL represented a priority for the international community.

The Special Representative emphasized that ISIL could not be defeated through military means alone. In that connection, he stressed that, unless the underlying ideology were addressed, military victories would not be sustainable or lasting. In addition, he warned that military victories must be complemented by rehabilitation and stabilization efforts in the areas liberated from ISIL, and that the safe return of displaced persons to their places of origin must be allowed and prioritized.

The Special Representative said that the liberation and holding of the cities of Bayji, Sinjar and, most of all, Ramadi, had instilled in the people the hope that the country could be freed from ISIL. He also said that the success achieved demonstrated the increasingly resolute and effective support to Iraq of the international counter-ISIL coalition, and had provided lessons for the liberation of the remaining territories, most notably of Mosul.

The Special Representative reported that the Government of Iraq had prioritized the return of displaced persons, and more than 500,000 displaced Iraqis had so far returned to their communities of origin. However, a number of factors were affecting the pace of the returns, including a large number of improvised explosive devices laid by ISIL, which had to be removed before populations could return home, as well as destroyed infrastructure and homes.

There had been an unfortunate lack of progress in implementing a national political agreement in Iraq. The persistent political polarization and divisions had continued to hamper the ability of Prime Minister Abadi to advance a reform agenda, including decentralization. The Prime Minister's announcement aimed at establishing a more professional Cabinet, with members selected on merit and not along sectarian lines or with regard to political quotas, should be accompanied by accelerated implementation of a genuine political, security and economic reform package.

In addition, the Special Representative reported that the humanitarian crisis in Iraq was highly complex and was expected to widen and worsen during 2016. He indicated that some 10 million Iraqis urgently required some type of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian needs were so great that they far outstripped national capacities. The Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government simply did not have the resources to keep providing assistance.

The Special Representative stated that the Organization continued to operate in difficult and dangerous conditions in Iraq. He reported that Amer al-Kaissy, the UNAMI staff member abducted in April 2015 in Diyala, had been found dead, and urged the Iraqi authorities to conduct a thorough and transparent investigation into that abduction and murder and hold the perpetrators accountable.

The Special Representative noted that the issues associated with the presence of Turkish forces in Ba'shiqah camp in Iraq remained unresolved. He reiterated the calls made by the Secretary-General for a solution that was in line with the Charter of the United Nations and fully respected the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. Both sides were urged to take steps that would enable the deepening of cooperation in the field of security and continuous support with regard to fighting ISIL, with the full consent of the Government of Iraq.

The Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, Mohamed Ali Alhakim, reported progress by the Iraqi security forces in their fight against ISIL, highlighting the retaking of the town of Ramadi in December 2015. He also emphasized that financial resources were insufficient to cope with the challenges in the humanitarian area and in the rebuilding of national infrastructure affected by the violence that plagued the nation. He thanked the international community for its support in the fight against terrorism. He requested that the Council demand that Turkey withdraw its troops from Iraqi territory, whose presence there was a

violation of Iraqi sovereignty, and noted that the Government of Iraq would continue to rely on dialogue and diplomacy to resolve its differences with Turkey. He urged countries to implement the resolutions of the Council that promoted border regulation and border controls to restrict access to arms by terrorist groups. In closing, he called for continued work with countries in the region to combat terrorism.

In their closed consultations, the members of the Council deplored the killing of the UNAMI staff member who had been abducted in April 2015. They welcomed the successes of the Government of Iraq against ISIL. They also emphasized the grave humanitarian situation in Iraq and the need to channel financial resources to it promptly. Several members emphasized the need for the international community to provide support to rehabilitate the areas liberated from ISIL and to allow the safe return of displaced persons. Some delegations also emphasized the importance of continued work on national reconciliation, with a view to achieving stability in Iraq. Some delegations emphasized that Turkey must respect Iraqi sovereignty. Other members expressed concern about reports of the use of chemical weapons in Iraq.

Yemen

On 16 February, the Council held a briefing, followed by closed consultations, on the humanitarian situation in Yemen.

During the briefing, the Council heard from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, pursuant to resolution [2201 \(2015\)](#). The Under-Secretary-General noted that the conflict in Yemen continued to cause immeasurable suffering and destruction, much of which resulted from indiscriminate shelling by the parties. He added that, since March 2015, the conflict had claimed more than 35,000 casualties, including more than 6,000 deaths, and that civilians accounted for at least 2,997 of those killed and 5,659 of those wounded. He also noted that well over 700 children had been killed and over 1,000 more had been injured. In addition, he referred to reports indicating that as many as 720 children had been recruited by the forces of both sides of the conflict.

The Under-Secretary-General reported that some 2.7 million people had had to flee their homes, 7.6 million people were suffering severe food insecurity, 2 million children were acutely malnourished and 14 million Yemenis had insufficient access to health care. In addition, 1.8 million children had been out of school since mid-March 2015, and more than 1,170 schools had been destroyed or were occupied by displaced persons and/or by armed groups. At least 900,000 people had seen their access to water restricted because air and artillery strikes and rockets had destroyed the water-supply infrastructure.

During January 2016, humanitarian agencies had been able to provide humanitarian aid (including water and fuel) to approximately 2.6 million people and health-care services to more than 102,000 people, including children with acute malnutrition.

The Under-Secretary-General said that, unfortunately, the parties to the conflict had been impeding access by humanitarian personnel to the affected areas. In that regard, he referred to the recent communication from Saudi Arabia requesting that all humanitarian workers withdraw from areas controlled by the

Houthi movement. He also referred to the decision of Saudi Arabia on 17 January 2016 to deny entry to the Regional Humanitarian Coordinator. In addition, he reported that, on 11 February, one of the charter vessels of the World Food Programme, which was carrying humanitarian supplies and had departed from Djibouti with a scheduled and approved stop in the Yemeni port of Hudaydah, was diverted by coalition forces to the Saudi Arabian port of Jazan. He also regretted the obstacles put in place by the Houthis when humanitarian assistance was being delivered to the areas in need.

In the face of those adverse conditions, the Under-Secretary-General reminded all parties of their obligations under international humanitarian law to facilitate humanitarian access to all areas of Yemen.

The Under-Secretary-General took the view that humanitarian assistance must be complemented by efforts to revive the economy and the flow of commercial goods, which had been severely impeded by the conflict. Given the heavy dependence in Yemen on imported food and fuel, it would be critical to ensure that inspections in line with resolution 2216 (2015) did not adversely affect the flow of commercial imports into Yemen of basic items for Yemeni civilians. He took the opportunity to announce that a United Nations verification and inspection mechanism for Yemen had been formally launched, and expressed his hope that the mechanism would contribute to continued improvements in the levels of commercial imports into Yemeni ports outside the control of the Government of Yemen and that were not channelled through a United Nations agency or recognized international humanitarian organization.

Reiterating that the humanitarian situation in Yemen was catastrophic, he concluded by calling upon the Council to press the parties to resume peace talks and agree to a ceasefire.

The members of the Council, meeting in closed consultations, expressed their deep concern at the humanitarian situation in Yemen, in particular humanitarian access. They also recognized the work carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat and its Head, who had noted the worrying deterioration of the humanitarian situation in that country to a level 3 emergency as a result of the intensification of hostilities. Some members emphasized that the Council had not directed the same level of attention at Yemen as it had to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, despite the fact that the humanitarian situation in Yemen was much worse. Several delegations expressed the view that the conflict in Yemen could only be resolved by political means.

On 17 February, the Council held a briefing to hear a report delivered pursuant to resolution 2201 (2015) by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, and a report by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014), Motohide Yoshikawa.

In his briefing, the Special Envoy referred to the discussions in Switzerland in December 2015, which had resulted in agreement on a number of confidence-building measures aimed at facilitating the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Yemeni people. Within that framework, a de-escalation and coordination committee aimed at strengthening adherence to the cessation of hostilities, agreed to on the first day of the talks, had been established. He also noted that the talks in

Switzerland served as the beginning of a process towards agreements on ending the war and returning Yemen to a peaceful political transition.

In spite of those advances, the Special Envoy said that the security situation in Yemen was continuing to deteriorate, and that many parts of the country continued to face air strikes and extensive ground fighting. The escalation of military activities, along with the worsening of regional tensions, had created additional obstacles that threatened to delay a new round of talks. The Special Envoy said that he did not have sufficient assurances that a new cessation of hostilities would be respected, and stressed that the conflict could not be resolved by military means, meaning that, in practice, a cessation of hostilities leading to a permanent ceasefire needed to be declared again. He urged the Council to support that step and take the necessary measures for its implementation as soon as possible.

The Special Envoy also referred to the notable upsurge in the number and magnitude of attacks carried out by terrorist groups (Al-Qaida and ISIL) in Aden, Lahij, Abyan, Shabwa and Sana'a, as well as the influence and control of those groups with respect to ports, maritime traffic and the illegal oil trade.

The Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#) made a report to the Council, in accordance with the requirements of that resolution, pointing to the final report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen published on 26 January ([S/2016/73](#)) and to the draft resolution that would renew for another year the measures freezing assets and banning travel, as well as the mandate of the Panel of Experts. In his view, the new draft resolution would present members of the Council with an opportunity to refine, and offer additional guidance on, the implementation of the targeted sanctions measures, in particular the targeted arms embargo. While noting the different views regarding the sanctions instrument, he emphasized the Council's unanimous call for a political solution to the crisis and for support for the efforts of the Special Envoy.

The members of the Council expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the Special Envoy in seeking a peaceful and political solution to the conflict. They also regretted that the peace talks, scheduled for 14 January 2016, had been suspended. They encouraged the parties to resume a dialogue that was unconditional and inclusive, with a view to reaching a settlement that would lead to the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Yemen. In that regard, they called for a ceasefire and expressed the importance of the establishing a de-escalation and coordination committee aimed at strengthening adherence to the cessation of hostilities, thereby achieving progress in the peace process. In addition, the members expressed concern about the progress of terrorist groups in that country, owing to institutional collapse and prevailing insecurity.

With regard to the Committee established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#), several delegations expressed support for the renewal of the mandate of the Panel of Experts. One delegation, however, felt that the Panel had exceeded its mandate and had made use of unreliable sources. Although many members expressed their support for the application of the sanctions, others also criticized them, noting that they had worsened the situation in the country.

On 18 February, the Council issued a statement to the press reiterating to the conflicting parties the requirement for the full implementation of resolution [2216 \(2015\)](#)

with a view to resuming and accelerating inclusive political consultations under the auspices of the United Nations. In addition, members expressed their serious concern regarding the humanitarian crisis in Yemen and urged the parties to fulfil their commitments to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including measures to ensure rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. The members of the Council also called upon all parties to comply with international humanitarian law and to take urgent measures to resume a ceasefire. Finally, they expressed their deep concern at the growing presence of Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and ISIL in Yemen.

On 24 February, the Council adopted resolution [2266 \(2016\)](#), which renewed the mandate of the sanctions regime established by resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#).

Syrian Arab Republic

On 1 February, under the item entitled “Other matters”, one delegation proposed a draft press statement condemning the terrorist attacks perpetrated by ISIL on 31 January 2016 in Damascus. Although some Council members suggested amendments to the text, all agreed on the need to condemn the terrorist attacks categorically and in a timely manner. The text of the press statement entitled “Terrorist attack in Damascus” was agreed upon and issued on 1 February 2016.

On 5 February, at the request of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and in connection with the peace talks in Geneva, the Council held consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” on the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, and was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura. In his presentation, the Special Envoy stated that he had decided to temporarily suspend the peace talks taking place in Geneva between the Syrian Government and the opposition as the conditions were not such as to encourage a productive understanding between the parties. To pave the way for the resumption of the talks, he called upon the Council to promote confidence-building measures, such as the lifting of blockades, access for humanitarian personnel and freedom of movement in besieged areas. All members of the Council expressed their support for the work of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General. Many of them called upon the Special Envoy to resume negotiations as soon as possible. Some expressed regret with respect to the unconstructive behaviour of the High Negotiations Committee, whose delegation withdrew unilaterally from the talks.

Also on 5 February, the Council, at the request of the delegation of the United States, held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” to discuss the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council was briefed by the Director of the Operational Division at the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, John Ging, who noted that military activity in the northern part of the Syrian Arab Republic had exacerbated the humanitarian situation in the country and that, if the main humanitarian corridor from Turkey were to be cut, thousands of people could be left without humanitarian assistance. The members of the Council expressed support for the United Nations humanitarian efforts in the country. Delegations blamed the deteriorating humanitarian conditions on the increased military activity carried out on the ground by the Syrian parties. Some members emphasized the need to avoid politicizing the issue of the humanitarian situation in the country and acknowledged the work undertaken by the Syrian Government to alleviate the humanitarian impact of the war on the population.

On 10 February, at the request of the delegations of Spain and New Zealand, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” to hear a briefing from the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Under-Secretary-General said that the military incursions into the northern part of the country had disrupted the delivery of humanitarian aid, and that around 30,000 people, 80 per cent of them women and children, had been displaced by military activity around Aleppo. He reiterated his request to both the Syrian Government and non-state actors on the ground for access to besieged areas. There was a continued need to provide water, electricity and basic services to many areas of the country, and 2 million Syrian children were currently unable to attend school as a result of the armed conflict. Lastly, stressing that providing access for humanitarian organizations was an obligation under international humanitarian law, he reiterated his request that humanitarian aid crossings be opened.

The members of the Council reiterated their support for the work carried out on the ground by the United Nations humanitarian agencies, and exchanged views on the situation, its root causes and ways to improve it.

On 19 February, at the request of the delegation of the Russian Federation, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” to address the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. During the consultations, the delegation from the Russian Federation held a presentation on violations by Turkey of the sovereignty of the Syrian Arab Republic and circulated a draft resolution on the inviolability of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council failed to reach the consensus required to proceed with the negotiation of the text.

On 22 February, the Council held a briefing, followed by closed consultations, and heard presentations by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Kim Won-soo, and the Head of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, Virginia Gamba de Potgieter, regarding the matter of the Syrian Arab Republic and chemical weapons, and regarding the first report of the Joint Investigative Mechanism, in compliance with resolution [2235 \(2015\)](#).

In his presentation, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs said that there were still security problems in the area in which the last remaining hangar due to be destroyed was located. He added that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) team had found some discrepancies between the initial declaration made by the Syrian Government and some of what was found on the ground, and that the issue would be submitted for the consideration of OPCW member States at the next OPCW meeting. The Head of the Joint Investigative Mechanism thanked the Council for its confidence in the investigation team and noted that the final report of the Mechanism would be presented on 2 September.

The members of the Council expressed support for the work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism and its Head. Some members expressed concern over the discrepancy between the initial declaration made by the Syrian Government and findings in the field, while others welcomed the destruction of the Syrian chemical

programme, covering 100 per cent of the material declared. Several members noted, with regard to the situation in the country, that the greatest progress had been made in relation to the destruction of chemical weapons.

Several members of the Council noted with concern the growing trend of chemical terrorism in the Syrian Arab Republic and the region and stressed the need to track down those responsible for the chemical weapons attacks. Two delegations said that the Council should consider expanding the Joint Investigative Mechanism to neighbouring countries, including Iraq, in the light of confirmed information regarding the presence in Iraqi territory of terrorists with the capacity to acquire, produce and use chemical weapons.

On 23 February, the Council issued a press statement condemning the string of attacks perpetrated on 21 February by ISIL in Damascus and Homs, in which dozens of Syrian civilians were killed. The members of the Council underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of those reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice and stressed that those responsible for the terrorist attacks must be held accountable. The members of the Council also expressed concern over foreign terrorist fighters joining ISIL, the Al-Nusrah Front and other terrorist organizations. In addition, the members of the Council reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constituted one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Finally, they called for the resumption of negotiations between the parties under the auspices of the United Nations as soon as possible and for immediate humanitarian assistance to reach all people in need, in particular in all besieged and hard-to-reach areas.

On 26 February, the Council held an open meeting, followed by closed consultations, to hear a briefing by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria on the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, in accordance with the requirements of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). In his presentation, the Special Envoy highlighted the progress made since his last interaction with the Council on 5 February. He noted that, as an outcome of the meeting of the International Syria Support Group in Munich on 12 February, specific obligations had been established with which both the members of the Group and the parties in the Syrian Arab Republic were required to comply, together with a mechanism in place to that effect, an agreed set of actions and an immediate timetable and timeline.

As a result of the agreements reached in Munich, aid had been delivered to almost 110,000 people and 200 additional trucks had been dispatched within the country in order to reach six additional locations. The World Food Programme had carried out the first test air-drop in Dayr al-Zawr in an attempt to reach ISIL-besieged areas home to more than 230,000 people.

With regard to the work of the International Syria Support Group ceasefire task force, the Special Envoy stated that the two Co-Chairs had been working throughout the week in order to achieve a cessation of hostilities as of midnight, Damascus time, on 26 February. In conclusion, the Special Envoy announced his intention to resume negotiations on 7 March.

The Council unanimously adopted resolution [2268 \(2016\)](#), submitted by the Russian Federation and the United States, regarding the cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The members of the Council agreed to emphasize that the only viable solution to the conflict was a political one. They welcomed the adoption of resolution [2268 \(2016\)](#), endorsing the agreement on the cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic, and expressed hope that that step by the Council would have a positive impact and lead to a definitive ceasefire. Most of them praised the cooperation between the Russian Federation and the United States that had made the agreement possible. They also expressed support for the work undertaken by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General.

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations, Bashar Ja'afari, reiterated his Government's commitment to a political settlement in which Syrians themselves would decide on their future, as well as its readiness to implement the cessation of hostilities.

Asia

United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

On 4 February, the Council held closed consultations to hear a presentation on the biannual report of the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia given by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Regional Centre, Petko Draganov. In his presentation, the Special Representative noted that the situation in Central Asia continued to be relatively stable despite the persistence of some transnational challenges and threats. In that connection, he referred to the heightened tensions arising from the management of shared water resources in the region and to the activities carried out by the Regional Centre with the coastal States to promote greater understanding of the rules and principles governing the legislation on the management of water resources.

The Special Representative also noted the deterioration of the economic situation and, in particular, the fall in oil prices and the devaluation of national currencies. He expressed disappointment at the lack of progress on border delimitations. With regard to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, he emphasized the efforts made by all five countries in the region to strengthen their borders and prevent young people in the area from being recruited by ISIL. In that connection, he noted that the Regional Centre had worked with the countries of Central Asia to implement the Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia. In addition, he raised concerns regarding the increase in drug trafficking in the region as a result of the situation in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, the Special Representative emphasized the Regional Centre's cooperation with the Collective Security Treaty Organization, the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, among others, with the aim of exchanging views on the situation in the region and promoting initiatives related to preventive diplomacy.

The Council members unanimously expressed their support for the efforts made by the Regional Centre to promote mechanisms for conflict prevention in order to ensure peace and security in the region. They also made reference to the

initiatives and meetings that the Regional Centre had organized throughout the relevant period with the countries of Central Asia, as well as with other States and regional bodies, in order to address the major challenges facing the region, such as the fight against transnational organized crime, the prevention of terrorism and violent extremism, the situation in Afghanistan, the management of water and energy resources, environmental security and the main priorities for cooperation in 2016.

On 10 February, in closed consultations, the delegation of the Russian Federation proposed, under the item entitled “Other matters”, a discussion on a draft press release highlighting the work of the Regional Centre, which it had circulated in the preceding days. The delegation expressed regret that, for the second year running, the members of the Council had not been able to agree on the content of a press statement in support of the Regional Centre, as a result of the opposition of one member to the statement’s reference to some regional organizations of which the countries of Central Asia were members and with which they were actively cooperating. Other delegations said they would be willing to continue the negotiations provided that the reference to those regional bodies was omitted. Given that it was not possible to reach consensus under such circumstances, the proposal was subsequently withdrawn.

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

On 7 February, the Council held emergency closed consultations, at the request of the delegations of the United States and Japan (as members of the Council), as well as of the Republic of Korea, regarding the launch using ballistic missile technology, characterized as a satellite launch by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, in violation of the relevant resolutions of the Council. The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs told Council members that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had already conducted such a launch on 11 December 2012. He noted that the rocket launch could only have been carried out using ballistic missile technology, which demonstrated that the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea had continued developing its ballistic capabilities in defiance of Council resolutions.

The Council members stated that the launch conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea using ballistic missile technology constituted a flagrant violation of the relevant resolutions of the Council. Several delegations noted that a month had passed since the country’s last nuclear test and that it was therefore necessary to adopt a new resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations as soon as possible. Other delegations appealed to the parties to take a calm and cautious approach and bear in mind that the objective was the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula as well as the safeguarding of peace and stability in the region. One delegation emphasized that any measures adopted should avoid exacerbating tensions in the region and that there should be no consideration of a military intervention.

On 7 February, the Council issued a press statement which strongly condemned the launch using ballistic missile technology conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, which was in serious violation of Council resolutions [1718 \(2006\)](#), [1874 \(2009\)](#), [2087 \(2013\)](#) and [2094 \(2013\)](#).

On 25 February, the Council held closed consultations to hear a briefing on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#), Román Oyarzun Marchesi, who presented the quarterly report of the work of the Committee, in compliance with that resolution, and the final report of the Panel of Experts of the Committee and the recommendations contained therein ([S/2016/157](#)).

In connection with the consideration of the quarterly report of the work of the Committee, one delegation introduced a draft resolution which sought to condemn the recent actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (the nuclear test conducted in January 2016 and the launch using ballistic missile technology conducted in February 2016) and to expand the scope and reach of the existing sanctions.

The delegations thanked the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#), for his presentation. The members of the Council also acknowledged the introduction of a draft resolution on the sanctions relating to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and undertook to study it carefully.

Myanmar

On 25 February, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled "Other matters" to hear a briefing from the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Vijay Nambiar. In his presentation, he discussed the situation in the country following the elections of 8 November 2015 in which new parliamentary representatives had been chosen. He described the situation in Myanmar as stable but fragile. He also reported that authorities of the Government of Myanmar and the leader of the winning National League for Democracy party, Aung San Suu Kyi, had held several meetings to seek an agreement that would ensure a peaceful transition and create the conditions for a new, stable government. The Special Adviser also said that the leaders of the Myanmar military had expressed their support for the political transition and their commitment to the process of dialogue. Finally, he pointed out the precarious conditions of the Rohingya population in Rakhine State, their humanitarian needs and the assistance provided by the United Nations.

The members of the Council expressed support for the political transition process and the formation of a new government that would contribute to peacebuilding and stability in Myanmar. They also encouraged all parties in Myanmar to continue fostering a climate of dialogue and national reconciliation to ensure the success of the process. Some members expressed willingness to continue expanding their relationship with Myanmar and continue promoting an environment favourable to reconciliation among the various ethnic populations and armed groups still present in the country. Several members of the Council also expressed concern over the humanitarian conditions of the Rohingya population in Rakhine State and urged the country's new authorities to give due attention to that situation, tackle discrimination and extremism and ensure respect for the human rights of all citizens.

Africa

Mission to West Africa

On 4 February, at the request of the delegations of Angola, France and Senegal, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” to consider a proposal to conduct a mission to West Africa. The delegation of Senegal reported that the mission was a joint initiative with France and Angola, and would include visits to Dakar, Bamako and Bissau, with a view to seeing first-hand the work of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel, and to holding meetings with the main actors in the political and security arenas in the region. The members of the Council agreed to continue consultations.

Guinea-Bissau

On 4 February, at the request of the delegation of Senegal, the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” to hear a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Tayé-Brook Zerihoun, on the situation in Guinea-Bissau.

The Assistant Secretary-General reported that Guinea-Bissau was experiencing political conflict caused by an internal division among various groups within the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde, the ruling party of Guinea-Bissau. He recalled that, in December 2015, the Government’s programme had been rejected after 15 legislators from the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde voted against their own party. He also recalled that the ruling party had reacted by expelling dissidents and incorporating their alternates into Parliament, which had managed to adopt the Government’s programme on 28 January. He noted that those differences had generated tension within the governing party and between the Government and the opposition. He also referred to the growing tension between the President and the Prime Minister, and said that while the army had remained neutral so far, the situation could change if tensions continued.

Members of the Council expressed their concern at the rise in political tensions within the ruling party. Several delegations highlighted the army’s prudent behaviour. A number of members reaffirmed that it was important that the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau continue its work. A text for a press statement was proposed by one delegation, but it failed to gather a consensus and was subsequently withdrawn.

On 17 February, the Council heard a briefing in compliance with resolution [2203 \(2015\)](#), followed by closed consultations, on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. In his briefing, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Miguel Trovoadá, stressed that the political situation had stabilized in part, but that there remained divisions and tensions within the ruling party, as well as the threat of an intervention by the military. The Special Representative requested that the Council issue a clear political message to the political actors in Guinea-Bissau, so that they would reach a political agreement and the situation would return

to normal. He emphasized that tensions in Guinea-Bissau discouraged the international community from fulfilling its commitments and jeopardized the achievements that had been made in the area of peacebuilding.

In closed consultations, Council members supported the efforts of the Special Representative. Several members backed the renewal of the mandate of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau and the continuation of the UNIOGBIS mandate. Some delegations emphasized the need to increase cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council in addressing the case. Several delegations supported a Council mission to Guinea-Bissau. The role of regional organizations present in the country was highlighted. One delegation emphasized that the solution to the problem must come from national actors.

The members of the Council agreed that the President of the Security Council would brief the press, expressing support for the regional bodies and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, commending the work of the ECOWAS Mission in Guinea-Bissau, expressing concern over the political tensions and calling upon internal actors to seek solutions through dialogue, while calling for the armed forces to remain outside the political arena.

On 26 February, the members submitted for the Council's consideration a draft resolution on the renewal of the mandate of UNIOGBIS for a period of 12 months. That resolution was adopted unanimously as Council resolution [2267 \(2016\)](#).

Sudan

On 4 February, the Council met in closed consultations to hear the quarterly report of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#) concerning the Sudan, on the work of the Committee from 5 November 2015 to 4 February 2016. Most members of the Council agreed to recognize the improved collaboration between the Government of the Sudan and the Panel of Experts on the Sudan, and they encouraged both parties to continue to strengthen their dialogue and cooperation.

However, one member of the Council felt that the final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan ([S/2016/805](#)) lacked objectivity, impartiality and professionalism. Some Council members agreed to encourage the publication of the final report, while others agreed to simply take note of its content.

The members of the Council agreed to express their concern at the humanitarian situation on the ground, and condemned the recruitment of children in the conflict and attacks against the civilian population in Darfur. A significant number of members felt that investigations into the illicit trafficking in gold were an excuse to extend the sanctions and were based on a non-existent link between the conflict in Darfur and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. One delegation would not accept any reference to the subject of natural resources, because their management was the sole and exclusive prerogative of sovereign States.

On 10 February, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2265 \(2016\)](#), in which it renewed the sanctions and the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan for an additional period of 13 months.

The delegation of the Russian Federation said that it was voting in favour of the resolution because of the need to promote a political solution to the situation in Darfur, but stressed that sanctions should be used appropriately, without politicization, to bring pressure to bear on the rebel groups that were opposed to the Government of the Sudan and which continued to refuse to join the peace talks, on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur. The United States delegation, for its part, expressed regret that the Committee had not been able to reach a consensus regarding the addition of new individuals to the sanctions list since 2006. The delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela said that, while it had joined the consensus, it was obliged to reaffirm the sovereign right of countries in the sovereign management of natural resources, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 1803 (XVII) of 1962. The delegation of the Sudan, participating pursuant to rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, called upon the Panel of Experts to keep its investigations limited to what was set forth in resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#).

South Sudan

On 19 February, the Council held a briefing, followed by closed consultations, on the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and on the sanctions imposed by the Council on South Sudan. The Chairperson of the Joint Monitoring and Evaluation Commission, Festus Mogae (in Addis Ababa), the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (Political) for UNMISS, Moustapha Soumaré (in Juba) and the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović (in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo) also participated through videoconference links.

The participating United Nations officials examined the situation from the perspective of their mandates and noted that, despite the declared ceasefire, violence had spread to several states of South Sudan, and that the deteriorating humanitarian situation could be attributable to the parties in conflict, for reasons including restrictions on access for humanitarian aid agencies and violations of the Status of Forces Agreement between UNMISS and the Government of South Sudan. They emphasized the importance of achieving progress in the formation of the Transitional Government in the terms established in the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan; they expressed concern about the Government's administrative actions, such as the new organization of the territory into 28 states; they expressed the view that a humanitarian, political, economic and development crisis was unfolding in South Sudan; they reminded the parties that they could not ignore the provisions of the Agreement; and they emphasized the role of the Council and UNMISS in the framework of the conflict.

In their statements, Mr. Mogae, Mr. Soumaré and Mr. Šimonović variously requested that the Council, as a gesture of support, state unequivocally that while the Agreement did not provide solutions to all of the problems in South Sudan, it was the basis for facilitating the intentions of compromise by the parties; that the Council should emphasize the urgency of completing the security arrangements, given the intention of the leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition, Riek Machar, to go to Juba to join the Transitional Government of National Unity only once the stipulated conditions for the establishment of opposition security forces in the capital had been met; and to provide support to the

African Union in the establishment of the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, condemning also all forms of violence engaged in by the parties to the conflict in South Sudan. They expressed confidence that the Transitional Government, once established, would act to put an end to violence and food insecurity, and expressed cautious optimism at the small steps that the Government and opposition had taken to implement the Agreement.

The Deputy Permanent Representative of South Sudan to the United Nations, Joseph Moum Majak Ngor Malok took the floor to reiterate the commitment of the Government of President Salva Kiir to the declared ceasefire and to the implementation of the Agreement. He requested support for the establishment of new barracks outside Juba that would house the opposition troops that would go to the capital under the Agreement, and indicated that South Sudan required assistance rather than sanctions from the United Nations, as the latter only contributed to further confrontations.

During the closed consultations, some members of the Council expressed serious concerns regarding the delays in the implementation of the Agreement because of the limitations imposed on the work of UNMISS as a result of the difficulties in accessing humanitarian aid; while some members emphasized the need to propose sanctions. Other members recognized the existing political, economic and humanitarian problems, but considered it necessary to emphasize the positive developments, even if those developments were slow to occur, including the implementation of the initial measures set out in the Agreement and with respect to the ceasefire, and the improvements in relations between South Sudan and the Sudan. Those members suggested that the Council should be more proactive with regard to South Sudan and should be cautious about sanctions, which, if implemented, could be counterproductive and would not help to resolve the situation. All were agreed on calling for an end to the violence and on urging the international community to support the Transitional Government, once formed.

Also on 19 February, the Council issued a statement to the press condemning in the strongest terms the violence committed by elements of the Shilluk and Dinka communities, which erupted in the protection-of-civilians site in Malakal, South Sudan, leaving more than 18 dead and 50 injured.

Central African Republic

On 9 February, the Council adopted resolution [2264 \(2016\)](#), increasing the number of corrections officers seconded to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic from 40 to 108.

Burundi

On 10 February, at the request of the delegation of France, the members of the Council held closed consultations under the item entitled “Other matters” to hear a briefing by the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Conflict Prevention, including in Burundi, Jamal Benomar, on the situation in Burundi. In his briefing, the Special Adviser recalled the visit of the members of the Council to Burundi on 21 and 22 January 2016, and the decision at the African Union summit, held on 30 and 31 January 2016, to send a high-level delegation to that country and not to deploy the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi.

The Special Adviser took the view that the Council's visit to the country had had a positive outcome and had resulted in a greater willingness by the President of Burundi to take the next steps in the mediation process for national and international inter-Burundian dialogue. He believed it unlikely that the Government of Burundi would grant its consent for the deployment of a peacekeeping operation by African Union forces or the United Nations, but suggested that it might be open to the establishment of a police or advisory force to cooperate with national security bodies and for training. The Special Adviser stressed the need to give new impetus to the political process.

The members of the Council recognized and supported the mediation efforts of the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, on behalf of the East African Community and the leadership of the African Union, within the framework of resolution [2248 \(2015\)](#) of 12 November 2015. They also took note of the communiqué issued by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union on 29 January 2016, at the level of Heads of State and Government, which decided not to deploy the African Prevention and Protection Mission in Burundi and to authorize the sending of a high-level delegation. Members of the Council jointly expressed their concern at the ongoing escalation of insecurity in the country. Finally, they supported the efforts of the Special Adviser and the strengthening of his country team within the framework of resolution [2248 \(2015\)](#).

Western Sahara

On 10 February, at the request of the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, acting in its national capacity, closed consultations of the Council were held under the item entitled "Other matters" in order to review the situation concerning Western Sahara.

The members of the Council were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on preparations for the Secretary-General's visit to the region, scheduled for the first week of March 2016.

The participants resolved to contribute, with the support of the parties, to finding a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution to an issue that had remained on the agenda of the Council for four decades. Some members of the Council also recalled the mandate of resolution [690 \(1991\)](#) regarding a referendum for self-determination. The consultations sought to provide Council support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Christopher Ross.

Mali

On 12 February, the Council issued a press statement condemning a complex terrorist attack against the Kidal camp of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), which claimed the lives of six peacekeepers from Guinea and injured several others. The press statement expressed condolences to the families of the victims and called upon the Malian Government to investigate the incident. Moreover, the members of the Council condemned all acts of terrorism and underlined the need to bring perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of those reprehensible acts of terrorism to justice. They also noted that the full implementation of the Agreement on Peace and

Reconciliation in Mali and the intensification of efforts to overcome asymmetric threats would contribute to improving the security situation across Mali.

Somalia/Eritrea

On 18 February, the Council held a briefing to hear a presentation by the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [751 \(1992\)](#) and [1907 \(2009\)](#) concerning Somalia and Eritrea, Rafael Ramírez, in compliance with the provisions of resolution [1844 \(2008\)](#). In his presentation, the Chair highlighted relevant aspects of the report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea. He reported that, despite the progress made by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army, the terrorist group Al-Shabaab continued to pose a threat to the country and the region. Interim regional administrations had had problems controlling territories recently liberated from the presence of Al-Shabaab, which had led to the resurgence of intercommunal tensions and conflicts. Humanitarian access remained extremely fragile, particularly in areas where Al-Shabaab enforced blockades on both humanitarian supplies and commercial trade by arresting and killing civilians and by destroying goods.

With regard to Eritrea, the Chair stressed that the Monitoring Group had found no evidence that the Government of Eritrea had provided support to Al-Shabaab. While the Monitoring Group had communicated with the Government of Eritrea on several occasions, cooperation could be much improved overall. He also emphasized that the Committee should review the changes in the security situation in the Horn of Africa, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of the current sanctions regarding Somalia and Eritrea.

The members of the Council expressed concern at the continued presence of Al-Shabaab in Somalia and the region. They also condemned the attacks of the terrorist group on the civilian population, AMISOM troops and the armed forces of Somalia. Several delegations suggested that the reconstruction of the Somali State should be led by Somalis and called upon the Government of Somalia to strengthen the control and administration of the areas liberated from Al-Shabaab. One delegation believed that the Council was not helping Somalia to channel its natural resources towards national reconstruction, for example, through paying the Somali National Army.

Several delegations welcomed the announcement of an electoral model for 2016 and urged the Federal Government of Somalia to work hand-in-hand with regional administrations to ensure its success. Several members expressed concern about the possible ties between Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram and ISIL; one member of the Council suggested organizing a joint meeting between the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [751 \(1992\)](#) and [1907 \(2009\)](#) concerning Somalia and Eritrea and the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolutions [1267 \(1999\)](#), [1989 \(2011\)](#) and [2253 \(2015\)](#) concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals, groups, undertakings and entities. Several members expressed concern at the tension between the Federal Government of Somalia and regional administrations regarding the management of natural resources. Several delegations called upon the Government of Eritrea to cooperate with the Monitoring Group, while one delegation expressed disappointment that despite the vulnerable security situation in the Horn of Africa,

the increasing threat of ISIL and the need to work towards good relations among all nations in the region, some countries insisted on seeing the sanctions against Eritrea as an end in themselves, and not as a means to finding a durable political solution to the conflict and providing stability in the country.

Europe

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

On 29 February, the Council held an open meeting to hear a presentation by the Chairperson-in-Office of OSCE and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Frank-Walter Steinmeier. As part of his presentation, he outlined the priorities of his office.

The Chairperson-in-Office said that the developments in Ukraine had shown how indispensable OSCE was when it came to uniting strength to maintain international peace and security. He also praised the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine, and expressed strong belief that implementing the Minsk agreements was the only way towards a sustainable political solution. With regard to Nagorno-Karabakh, he stressed the importance of intensifying efforts within the framework of the OSCE Minsk Group to reduce casualties and achieve a lasting solution. He emphasized the need to promote confidence-building measures among OSCE-participating States to achieve better success in crisis prevention and risk reduction. He also called upon the international community to give greater prominence to the issue of migration and to make progress in the fight against discrimination, racism, xenophobia and intolerance.

The members of the Council commended the efforts of OSCE to build peace and stability in the region, within the framework of Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. Most of the members of the Council expressed their support for the priorities identified by Germany. Many Council members said that the Minsk agreements remained the agreed basis for a peaceful resolution to the situation in Ukraine, and referred to the endorsement of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements by the Council in its resolution [2202 \(2015\)](#).

United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

On 29 February, the Council held a briefing, in compliance with resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#), to hear a presentation by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, on the basis of resolutions [1160 \(1998\)](#), [1199 \(1998\)](#), [1203 \(1998\)](#), [1239 \(1999\)](#) and [1244 \(1999\)](#). In his presentation, the Special Representative referred to the political polarization in Kosovo and its impact on the work of the Assembly of Kosovo and other institutions in the country. He also stressed the need for continued economic growth and the creation of employment opportunities, which he believed would help defuse political tensions. He noted that respect for fundamental human rights had been inconsistent, as it was influenced by political tensions between communities. He added that laws and programmes designed to protect the rights of ethnic and religious minority groups and ensure the

protection of cultural heritage remained areas of concern, as did the implementation of property rights and the limited access women had to such rights.

The Special Representative explained the urgency of building institutional capacity in Kosovo with a view to responding to the challenges posed by radicalization and extremism, the training and financing of terrorists and the associated trafficking of human beings and weapons.

The First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Serbia, Ivica Dačić, participated in the meeting on the basis of article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. As part of his statement, he stressed that the continued presence of UNMIK was still needed to create the conditions for a lasting and sustainable solution in the region. He added that religious extremism, as well as radicalized terrorist and extremist elements, were a cause for concern. He stressed that finding a political solution was a national priority for Serbia, but that first reconciliation must take place; to that end, Belgrade was actively engaged in high-level dialogue with Pristina, facilitated by the European Union.

Ms. Vlora Çitaku also participated in the meeting on the basis of article 39 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. In her statement, she emphasized that Kosovo was an independent State. With regard to the Serbian community in Kosovo, she stressed that it was fully represented and that measures were being taken to support that community. She also noted that the normalization of relations in the region had gained new momentum, and that reconciliation would be possible only when Serbia acknowledged the crimes committed.

Most of the members of the Council expressed the need to increase the number of high-level dialogues between Belgrade and Pristina facilitated by the European Union, as only one session had been conducted during the period in question. They also stressed the need to implement the agreements reached in August 2013 in Brussels, and expressed their concern at the acts of violence and intimidation in the Assembly of Kosovo. All political actors were called upon to refrain from violence. The call for the establishment of an association/community of Serb-majority municipalities was reiterated as a key prerequisite for improving the lives of the Serbian population in Kosovo and supported by most members of the Council. European countries and those who recognized Kosovo welcomed the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union. One delegation noted that the Stabilization and Association Agreement was an end in itself and integrated Kosovo into the stabilization and association process but did not establish a precedent, nor did it imply the inclusion of the territory in the process of the expansion of the European Union.

Most members commended the fact that the necessary steps had been taken in the Netherlands to host the Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office tasked with trying the crimes committed during the war. In addition, they argued for them to become operational as soon as possible. All members of the Council supported the ongoing efforts of UNMIK.

Thematic issues

Boko Haram

On 2 February, the Council issued a press statement condemning the terrorist attacks committed by Boko Haram on the population of Dalori, in north-eastern Nigeria, on 30 January 2016.

Working methods of the subsidiary organs of the Security Council

On 11 February, the President of the Security Council organized a discussion on the working methods of the Council's subsidiary organs, particularly the sanctions committees. In the context of that discussion, the Council heard briefings by Olof Skoog, Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations (sponsor country of the high-level review of United Nations sanctions in 2015), and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations, Carlos Olguín Cigarroa, who spoke on behalf of the Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations and former Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1572 \(2004\)](#) concerning Côte d'Ivoire and the Committee established pursuant to resolution [2206 \(2015\)](#) concerning South Sudan, Cristián Barros Melet. The debate was chaired by the President of the Security Council.

The Permanent Representative of Sweden emphasized that sanctions should be part of a broader political strategy; a closer relationship should therefore be promoted between committee Chairs, the countries that drafted resolutions (the penholders) and the Secretariat. He also stressed the need to establish clear criteria for the lifting of sanctions, as well as the need to avoid or minimize the unintended impact of sanctions. At the same time, he argued that it was desirable to improve interaction between the committees and the countries affected by the sanctions through active dialogue, as well as through more field visits, reports and high-level reviews.

The Permanent Representative of Sweden suggested that the reports of the committees should be submitted in open meetings, emphasizing the importance of holding joint meetings between those committees and working groups with common geographical or thematic areas. He also argued for a transparent process of appointing the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and suggested that the appointments should take place as early as possible in order to facilitate the preparation of future Chairs.

The Deputy Permanent Representative of Chile provided a list of measures that could be taken to improve the work of the sanctions committees. First, he suggested that implementation assistance notes should be issued with regard to the sanctions lists. Second, he noted that due process should be strengthened, in particular with regard to the role of the Ombudsperson. Third, he suggested that the committee Chairs should submit their reports in open meetings and issue press releases when appropriate. He also highlighted the need to enhance the relationship between the committees and other United Nations entities in the field.

Several Council members emphasized the need to enhance cooperation with regional and subregional organizations. A significant number of delegations stressed the need to improve the due process and transparency of the subsidiary bodies and

to promote greater participation by both affected and neighbouring countries. They also stressed the importance of the work carried out by the 10 elected members of the Council and supported the early appointment of the Chairs of subsidiary bodies. A group of delegations called for greater coordination between the subsidiary bodies of the Council and the establishment of clear criteria for the lifting of sanctions.

Several members expressed their hope that the preparation of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies would be improved, and that they would be appointed well in advance. One member expressed regret that the rules of procedure of the Council, which stipulated that all decisions must be taken by consensus, made it impossible for the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies to innovate; he also cited the difficulty involved in working while being subject to 15 vetoes. Several delegations stressed the need to promote greater coordination between the Chairs of the sanctions committees and the penholders. One delegation suggested that open meetings of the sanctions committees did not necessarily contribute to greater efficiency. The same delegation stated that the parameters of each committee were unique and specific and that they should not be universalized, and that it was ready to discuss the usefulness of a mechanism such as the Informal Working Group on General Issues of Sanctions to assess the functioning of the sanctions regimes.

At the urging of the President of the Security Council, delegations from countries subject to sanctions were for the first time invited to participate and offer their points of view, as the views of the countries affected to varying degrees by the application of those sanctions was deemed necessary to fairly contextualize that important discussion item, while eliminating double standards and bias as much as possible. In that connection, the delegations of the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Eritrea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Libya and the Sudan participated in the meeting under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, as countries affected by Security Council sanctions regimes.

One delegation felt that clear criteria for the lifting of sanctions should be established and regularly reviewed in the light of the overall political strategy. It also stated that the Secretary-General should submit a report on the humanitarian implications of the sanctions measures. Another delegation stressed that sanctions, applied in an efficient manner without collateral damage, could contribute to international peace and security. Several delegations complained of difficulties in obtaining the reports of the expert groups before the rest of the Organization's members. Other delegations criticized the lack of transparency and impartiality of expert groups. One delegation stated that the reports of the expert groups should strictly adhere to the mandates set out in the relevant resolutions. Several delegations emphasized the importance of visits by the Chairs of the committees to the affected countries.

As a result of that discussion, on 22 February, the Council adopted a note by the President of the Security Council on the work of the Council's subsidiary bodies ([S/2016/170](#)).

Maintenance of international peace and security: respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations

On 15 February, the Council held an open debate entitled "Respect for the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations as a key element for

the maintenance of international peace and security". The meeting was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Delcy Eloína Rodríguez Gómez, and involved representatives of 69 Member States, observers and international organizations.

The Secretary-General stressed that, for the millions of people living in extreme poverty and war, as well as the countless people whose rights were violated and neglected in other ways, it remained difficult to achieve the ideals and aspirations of the Charter of the United Nations. He cited the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change as examples of the ability of States to overcome divisions and promote the vision enshrined in the Charter.

All Member States reaffirmed the validity of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of international law, as well as the need to respect and comply with the principles stated therein. Several delegations noted that many fundamental principles of the Charter, including sovereign equality, the fulfilment in good faith of obligations by States, the peaceful settlement of disputes, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and refraining from the threat or use of force, were violated on a recurring basis in international relations, resulting in a negative impact on international peace and security. According to several delegations, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, as well as for human rights and non-intervention in internal affairs, together with the promotion of peace and development, constituted elements that should be part of the open debate on the implementation of the principles and purposes of the Charter and the role of the United Nations in international relations.

Other delegations emphasized that phenomena such as terrorism, the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, prolonged conflicts, outstanding colonial situations and instability in areas of the Middle East and Africa were the result of the implementation by certain nations of approaches that were entirely contrary to the purposes and principles set out in the standards of international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Several delegations noted that the difficulty and complexity of the challenges facing humankind today required decisive action by the United Nations, including the Council, in order for Member States to cooperate in the development of a multilateral approach that would enable them to respond to those challenges in the framework of the principles and purposes of the Charter, which must be applicable to all States, organizations and individuals, since the partial interpretation or implementation of those principles and purposes could lead to situations that departed completely from the objective of the Charter to maintain international peace and security.

Some delegations reiterated that the success of the Organization lay in its ability to implement the provisions of Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, relating to the settlement of conflicts by peaceful means, more than in the implementation of actions under Chapter VII of the Charter, which were more difficult and costly to implement and must be seen as a means to the end of a conflict and not as an end in themselves. In that regard, several States stressed the need to give priority to peaceful means of settling disputes, including the good offices of the Secretary-General, mediation, the gathering of information by research committees and requests for advisory opinions from the International Court

of Justice. Some delegations stressed that the maintenance of international peace and security was not the only goal enshrined in the Charter, and in that regard noted that human rights were inseparable from economic and social progress and development.

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

On 26 February, the Council met in closed consultations to address the appointment of the Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals.

On 29 February, the Council adopted resolution [2269 \(2016\)](#), by 11 votes in favour, zero against and 4 abstentions, thereby designating Serge Brammertz as Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals. Angola, Egypt, the Russian Federation and Senegal abstained. In their interventions, the delegations of Angola, Egypt and Senegal noted that the nomination of Mr. Brammertz undermined the principle of equitable geographical distribution, as now the President, Prosecutor and Registrar of the Mechanism would all be from countries that were members of the Western European and other States Group. For its part, the delegation from the Russian Federation explained that it did not support the proposal of the Secretary-General with regard to the appointments to the posts of President and Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and expressed very serious concerns about the chosen candidates, who used to occupy positions in the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and had therefore abstained. The delegation expressed its discomfort with the ineffectiveness of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, in particular its repeated delays in meeting deadlines indicated by the Council, including the deadline set by the Council in its resolution [1966 \(2010\)](#), according to which the closing of the Tribunal should have occurred by 31 December 2014.

Post-conflict peacebuilding

On 23 February, the Council held an open debate entitled “Post-conflict peacebuilding: review of the peacebuilding architecture”. In the context of the discussion, presentations were heard by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Macharia Kamau; the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations and the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Olof Skoog; and the President of the Advisory Group of Experts on the 2015 Review of the United Nations Peacebuilding Architecture, Gert Rosenthal. The debate was chaired by the President of the Security Council.

In his presentation, Mr. Kamau stressed that countries emerging from conflict required sustainable financing for long periods of time. Mr. Skoog, for his part, stressed the need for the Peacebuilding Commission to adopt more flexible and transparent working methods and to improve its partnerships with regional and subregional actors. Mr. Rosenthal emphasized the need to address peacebuilding as a holistic process focused on conflict prevention.

Delegations from 54 countries participated in the debate, together with representatives of the European Union, the African Union, the Organization of

American States and the Holy See. Many delegations emphasized that addressing the root causes of conflict should be a priority for the United Nations. Many delegations also referred to the need to develop a culture of prevention within the United Nations. Other delegations spoke of the need to see peacebuilding as a continuum ranging from conflict prevention to peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction. Several delegations also felt that funding for peacebuilding activities must be sustainable and predictable. Some delegations emphasized that the duration of peacebuilding activities might vary depending on each country and situation, and that rigid processes and timetables must therefore be avoided. Other delegations stressed that the primary challenge was not only a lack of resources, but also the lack of coordination among United Nations entities to address the complex nature of conflicts, avoid overlapping mandates, grant resources and ensure the accountability of the agencies of the United Nations system within the framework of peacebuilding in a given region.

Some delegations drew attention to the technical and political aspects inherent in peacebuilding processes, stressing the importance of taking into account the political realities on the ground, local political mechanisms and national political dynamics and capacities and thereby avoiding the limitation of peacebuilding to the prioritized implementation of purely operational strategies of a technical nature, which had been the case in other post-conflict situations.

Several delegations highlighted the need for ownership by the host State of the definition and implementation of peacebuilding initiatives. One delegation emphasized that peacebuilding should include everyone: men, women, children, minorities, the vulnerable, those in government and those in opposition. Other delegations stressed that the risk of a relapse into conflict was particularly acute during the early transition stages towards peacebuilding. Several delegations called for the institutionalized participation of women in peacebuilding processes. Several delegations also emphasized the need to eradicate poverty, promote development and gender equality and create inclusive institutions and societies.

Summary of the activities of the presidency

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2010/507](#))

In accordance with established practices, and consistent with the desire of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to remain accountable to the membership of the Organization, the wrap-up meeting of the presidency of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was held on 26 February.

The major milestones reached during February were presented, with emphasis on the development and results of the open debates promoted by the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The delegation took the opportunity to refer in detail to the note by the President of the Security Council on the work of the subsidiary bodies of the Council ([S/2016/170](#)), stemming from the productive exchange of ideas about the working methods of the aforementioned subsidiary organs, in particular the sanctions committees.

Several delegations referred to the thematic debate chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the Charter of the

United Nations and its relevance as the guarantor of international peace and security. Some delegations referred to instances of brazen interference in the internal affairs of States, through support for unlawful regime changes or the violent imposition of imported cultural or social norms. In that regard, several members commented on the relevance and importance of the principles of the peaceful settlement of conflicts, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and refraining from the threat or use of force.

A significant number of delegations welcomed the discussion on the working methods of the subsidiary bodies of the Security Council and commended the determination and perseverance of the delegation of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in negotiating and publishing its note by the President of the Security Council. They stressed the importance of applying the note in practice and made reference to the joint responsibility of the Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and their staff and secretariats, in particular with regard to the transparency of work and the need to have an objective perspective on the promotion of sanctions as one of the methods available to the Council to resolve conflicts rather than inflict punishment.

Several delegations highlighted the importance of the debate on the ongoing review of the peacebuilding architecture. In that regard, they emphasized the contribution of the discussion to the ongoing negotiations on a draft resolution on the subject, to be adopted jointly by the Council and the General Assembly. Certain delegations pointed out that peacebuilding must be aimed at preventing the outbreak, recurrence and continuation of armed conflict, and therefore must encompass a wide range of political, developmental, humanitarian and human rights programmes and mechanisms. A significant number of delegations also stated that sustaining peace was an ongoing task that took place before, during and after conflict, and required adjustments with regard to traditional approaches to peacebuilding.

The meeting also allowed Council members to revisit some of the topics covered during the open and closed sessions of the Council, including both the most prominent issues of those mandates, such as those that arose from unique international circumstances, and other long-standing and unresolved issues. In that regard, a significant number of members of the Council stressed the relevance of the consultations on the question of Palestine, especially with regard to the humanitarian suffering and continued violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. In that regard, they referred to the delicate status of the question of Palestine in the light of the Israeli settlement policy, the confiscation of Palestinian land and the destruction of Palestinian homes, which nullified the possibility of a two-State solution.

Several delegations stated that the consensus agreements reached on the draft resolutions on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic had been of particular importance. With regard to the Syrian Arab Republic, several delegations urged the parties, whether Syrian or not, to maintain their commitment to continuing the meetings in Geneva and to start negotiations between the Syrian Government and the opposition, under the auspices of the United Nations.

Concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, two delegations felt that the sanctions were not punitive but practical, and that they would contribute to

the collective efforts of the Council to hinder the country's ability to raise funds, import technology and acquire the technical expertise required for the development of its nuclear programme and ballistic missiles.

Some delegations referred to the consultations of the Council on Burundi, pointing to the importance of not imposing a narrow view of the political resolution of the crisis without consulting the Government of Burundi.

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela appreciated the contribution of the members of the Council and their willingness to work with the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela during its presidency, as well as the assistance and solidarity of United Nations Member States. In turn, the members of the Council congratulated the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on the successful performance of its presidency.
