

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 30 December 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of
the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations
addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith an assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Equatorial Guinea in February 2019 (see annex). The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations and should not be considered as representing the views 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) Job Obiang **Esono Mbengono**
Ambassador-Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Deputy Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 30 December 2019 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Evaluation of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Equatorial Guinea (February 2019)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Equatorial Guinea in February 2019, the Security Council held 22 public meetings and 12 private consultations. During the month, the following were adopted: four resolutions, one statement by the President of the Security Council and eight press statements.

The Security Council also embarked on an official field trip to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau. Equatorial Guinea included three discretionary sessions in the official programme of work for February: an open debate about "Silencing the Guns by 2020" in Africa, under the agenda item "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations" (27 February); a high-level debate on mercenary activities as a source of insecurity and destabilization in Africa, under "threats to international peace and security" (4 February); and a debate on transnational organized crime at sea, under "maintenance of international peace and security" (5 February).

Contrary to the usual practice, the provisional programme of work for February was not adopted during the first working day, but rather in the following week, owing to the inability of Security Council members to agree on the scheduling of certain meetings. At the end of the month, a "Toledo formula" meeting was held as a wrap-up to the presidency.

Africa

Debate on threats to international peace and security: mercenary activities as a source of insecurity and instability in Africa

On 4 February, the Security Council held a high-level debate on mercenary activities as a source of insecurity and destabilization in Africa. Equatorial Guinea distributed a concept note in preparation for the debate. The event was chaired by the President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo. The Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat (by videoconference), addressed the Council. Representatives of the Central African Republic, Chad, the Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Rwanda and the Sudan were invited to participate in the debate in accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

It was asserted in the concept note that the strategically located and resource-rich Central African region had become fertile ground for groups operating as "guns for hire" for all kinds of subversive activities, especially trafficking in small arms and light weapons, poaching and terrorism. Weak State control over national territory, porous borders and the absence of coordinated measures to counteract the proliferation of mercenaries and their activities had only emboldened such groups to operate outside the law.

In his opening remarks, the Secretary-General said that countering the illicit behaviour of mercenaries required strengthening legal frameworks. He called upon Governments to accede to the 1989 International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries.

The Secretary-General also advocated greater bilateral, regional and international cooperation on border management and efforts to understand the political, economic, social and psychological factors that gave rise to mercenary activities. “Together, let us strengthen our work across the spectrum of this challenge,” he said.

The Chairperson of the African Union Commission said that the continent’s history was punctuated by coups, armed conflict, interventions and attempts to seize control, with the most recent example in Equatorial Guinea, where an attempted coup involving foreign mercenaries had recently been thwarted. He recommended the establishment of a continental framework for the supervision of private security companies – an initiative on which the African Union was consulting with the United Nations – and better cooperation on intelligence and criminal prosecutions, without which efforts would not be effective.

When the floor was opened, high-level officials from Africa said inattention to the threat posed by “soldiers of fortune” had led to significant material damage and loss of human life. The President of Equatorial Guinea said that there had been five attempts involving mercenaries to overthrow his legitimate Government and illegally seize its assets.

As Security Council members took the floor, they recognized the threat posed by mercenaries to peace, security and development not only in Central Africa, but also beyond it, emphasizing the areas that they deemed more important, including but not limited to the distinction between private military/security companies and mercenaries, the environmental impact of mercenary activities or their ties to transnational organized crime, terrorism and the illicit exploitation of natural resources. Adherence to and the effective implementation of existing international laws were also pointed out. Many Council members also referred to structural factors such as a lack of State presence, institutional weakness, poverty and an absence of the rule of law, as well as continued interventionist policies by foreign Powers, as enabling conditions.

Many Security Council members also pointed out that the issue of mercenary activity had not been sufficiently dealt with from a peace and security perspective. Since 2003, the Council had not formally addressed the issue, and they welcomed the holding of conversations, hoping that the Council would remain vigilant and seized of the matter.

Situation in Somalia

On 7 February, the Security Council met in consultations, at the request of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in reaction to events on the ground in Somalia. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, informed the Council of her recent visit to Somalia, specifically on the circumstances surrounding how and why the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), Nicholas Haysom, had been summarily expelled from the country. She deeply regretted that course of action and expressed the determination of the Federal Government of Somalia to remain firm on the decision taken. She also regretted the persistence of ongoing confrontations between the Federal Government and the federated states.

The members of the Security Council indicated that the Federal Government of Somalia should collaborate with UNSOM and respect the authority of the Council with regard to the expulsion and declaration of the Special Representative as *persona non grata*. They lamented the most recent attacks by Al-Shabaab and expressed the need and their intention to continue to help to increase security in Somalia.

The members of the Security Council thanked the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and described her visit to the area as timely and relevant, and reaffirmed the pivotal role of UNSOM in stabilizing the situation in the country. Council members also pointed out that the partnership between the Federal Government of Somalia and the United Nations was critical to the success of the Mission.

Central African Republic

On 7 February, at the request of the pen holder (France), the Security Council held informal consultations to address the situation in the Central African Republic. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, addressed the Council, specifying that the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups had signed an agreement on 6 February 2019 for the cessation of hostilities.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, thanked those who had facilitated the signing and encouraged the parties to fulfil their commitments, expressing also their intention to closely monitor compliance through a follow-up calendar.

On 21 February, the Security Council held its 8467th meeting, under the agenda item “The situation in the Central African Republic”. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, presented the Council with the most recent report on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The following also addressed the Council: the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Smaïl Chergui; the Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, Koen Vervaeke (by videoconference); the Deputy Permanent Representative of Côte d’Ivoire to the United Nations, Gbolié Désiré Wulfran Ipo, and acting Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic; and Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations and Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, Sylvie Valérie Baïpo Temon, was invited to participate in the meeting in accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

The Special Envoy, who also heads MIINUSCA, emphasized that the unified political support of the Security Council, the countries of the region and the international community would remain critical to the successful implementation of the Political Agreement. While its signing represented an important milestone on the path to a lasting solution to years of conflict, it was “only a first step”, he cautioned.

The Special Envoy said that the Political Agreement differed from previous peace agreements, noting that it encompassed monitoring mechanisms and discussions on pressing issues, while supporting the vision of the Secretary-General on the primacy of political decisions over military action.

The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security asked the Security Council to consider adapting elements of MINUSCA to better match the current situation on the ground. Underlining the great needs of the people of the Central African Republic, he said that some communities did not even know what a hospital was and appealed for immediate action to implement the Political Agreement and give the people hope.

Echoing that sentiment were the acting Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#), the Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service and the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The members of the Security Council again welcomed the Political Agreement and vowed to monitor its effective compliance and implementation by the signatories. They lamented that not all armed groups had signed it and noted that women needed to be included in all decision-making processes. The public meeting was followed by private consultations.

Situation in Burundi

On 19 February, the Security Council held its 8465th meeting, under the agenda item “The situation in Burundi”. Addressing the Council were the following: the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Michel Kafando; the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Fatima Kyari Mohammed; and the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, Jürg Lauber, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundian configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission. In accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, the representative of Burundi was invited to participate in the meeting.

The meeting was held in the context of the general election in Burundi in 2020. The Special Envoy pointed to, in particular, the stated intention of the country’s President, Pierre Nkurunziza, not to seek re-election, as well as the recognition by the Government of the opposition National Congress for Freedom. He noted, however, the ongoing humanitarian and human rights concerns, as well as the plight of those displaced inside the country and that of Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries.

The Special Envoy recalled his visit to Burundi from 20 to 29 January, during which he was unable to meet President of Burundi, as well as his subsequent meeting with the President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, who is also the mediator of the inter-Burundi dialogue. He added that he had also attended the Summit of the Heads of State of the East African Community, on 1 February, at which the Presidents of Kenya, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania were tasked with pursuing mediation efforts.

The Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations reiterated that organization’s support for all efforts towards a lasting, peaceful and consensual solution in Burundi. She encouraged the Government and opposition groups to step up efforts to finalize a consensual and inclusive agreement that was consistent with the spirit and content of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, urging the Government to continue with preparations for transparent and peaceful elections.

The Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission said that, in the course of 2019, the entity would focus on the elections in 2020 and the persistent socioeconomic challenges in Burundi. He shared several recommendations and suggested that the Government of Burundi, as well as political parties and other stakeholders, work closely together, with support from other Member States in the subregion, to create an enabling environment for inclusive, democratic and peaceful elections.

In the ensuing debate, Security Council members agreed that, in the run-up to the presidential and parliamentary elections, dialogue among all stakeholders must continue on the basis of the Arusha Agreement and with the help of the East African Community and the African Union. Several members voiced concern over the

decision of the Government to suspend foreign non-governmental organizations and its closure of the local office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The meeting was followed by private consultations in which Security Council members again diverged on the frequency of the meetings on the subject but nevertheless agreed on the need to accompany the critical political process unfolding in Burundi towards the elections in 2020. Members also discussed the status and the roles of United Nations and African Union envoys for Burundi.

Consultations on the normalization of relations between Djibouti and Eritrea

On 21 February, the Security Council held consultations on relations between Djibouti and Eritrea. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs addressed the Council on relations between Djibouti and Eritrea and said that there was calm on the border between the two countries since both parties had decided to normalize their relations and that there were positive steps towards that goal. The briefing was based on a letter from the Secretary-General to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/154), which served as the periodic report mandated pursuant to Council resolution 2444 (2018). She spoke of a historic moment in the Horn of Africa facilitated by a rapprochement between Djibouti and Eritrea, with positive implications for peace and security in the region. She also spoke of limited high-level contact between the two countries, facilitated by third parties.

The members of the Security Council agreed to congratulate Djibouti and Eritrea for their willingness to resolve their differences peacefully and noted that the lifting of sanctions on Eritrea was very positive. However, differences arose regarding the format and content of the meeting going forward, given that the two parties involved held opposing views on the matter and Council members tended to reflect the views of the one or the other in terms of how to proceed, the involvement of the international community and the status of the remaining issues between the two countries.

Adoption of resolution 2455 (2019) concerning the Sudan (Darfur)

On 7 February, the Security Council unanimously adopted its resolution 2455 (2019). The text was presented by the United States of America. Pursuant to the resolution, the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan was extended until 12 March 2020. In its resolution, the Council expressed its intention to establish clear, well-identified and measurable key benchmarks that could serve in guiding the Council to review measures taken against the Government of the Sudan. The representative of the Sudan was invited to participate in the meeting in accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

On 25 February, the Security Council held a meeting on the situation in South Sudan and the Sudan. Addressing the Council were the following: the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bintou Keita, who spoke about the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Hybrid Operation (S/2019/44); the Assistant Secretary-General and Assistant Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, Mourad Wahba; and the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, Oscar Fernández-Taranco. The representative of the Sudan was invited to participate in the meeting in accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council. The meeting was followed by consultations.

The meeting was held against the background of unprecedented widespread protests against the Government in Khartoum, which prompted the declaration of a country-wide state of emergency. Security Council members were faced with assessing the impact of those developments on the peace process in Darfur and the plans to draw down UNAMID by the middle of 2020. Presenting the report of the Secretary-General on UNAMID, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations updated members of the Council on the Hybrid Operation's reconfiguration and troop reduction, given that it aimed to exit Darfur by 30 June 2020, as stipulated in Council resolution [2429 \(2018\)](#). She conceded that the impact of the recent developments in Khartoum on the dynamics related to the peace process in Darfur were yet to be assessed, adding that the replacement of state governors in the Sudan would have a bearing on the peace process and that some armed movements had hardened their positions.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations affirmed the commitment of the entire United Nations system to ensuring that it operated as one, in close coordination with the Government of the Sudan. She emphasized that the exit of UNAMID must not create a vacuum that could lead to persistent local tensions or new risks. She called upon the Government to continue to create conditions that favoured the return of internally displaced persons and suggested that Khartoum talk with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to establish a framework of cooperation for addressing sexual violence.

In the ensuing debate, several Security Council members expressed concern about the current situation in the Sudan and the impact that it could have on the withdrawal of UNAMID and on sustainable peace in Darfur. The need to address the root causes of conflict and to ensure accountability for perpetrators of serious crimes and abuses were among the most repeated statements.

After the open meeting, the Security Council held private consultations to continue the examination of the situation in the Sudan.

Consultations on the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#) concerning Somalia

On 25 February, the Security Council held consultations to examine the work of its Committee pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#) concerning Somalia. The Chair of the Committee, Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve of Belgium, addressed the Council.

Open debate on cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations on Silencing the Guns by 2020 in Africa

On 27 February, the Security Council, at its 8473rd meeting, held a high-level open debate on the African Union initiative, Silencing the Guns by 2020. It was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea, Simeón Oyono Esono Angue. Equatorial Guinea had organized the meeting to adopt Council resolution [2457 \(2019\)](#) and to address several questions regarding cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in the context of the initiative. The Council, in its resolution, outlined steps leading towards the goal of ending conflict in Africa through enhanced international cooperation and partnership, as well as robust support for peace operations led by the African Union. The Council unanimously adopted the resolution, with 74 co-sponsors and 60 speakers.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Equatorial Guinea chaired the meeting. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the African Union High Representative for Silencing the Guns by 2020 and the founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, Vasu Gounden, also shared the perspectives of their organizations with

the members of the Council. They compared the progress made since the African Union had adopted Silencing the Guns by 2020 as a flagship project towards the implementation of Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, notwithstanding the many challenges that lay ahead.

More than 50 delegates from the wider United Nations membership shared perspectives and expressed their support for ongoing efforts. Many called for guarantees of the inclusion of women and young people in peace processes, while others urged greater cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union in nurturing a culture of peace. Still others recommended enhancing the exchange of best practices and lessons learned so that countries could use them to prevent or resolve conflict.

A number of delegates expressed alarm that, whereas Africa was not a major arms producer, it remained riddled with illegally imported small arms and light weapons, which inflamed or exacerbated conflict and tensions. The representative of Benin, speaking on behalf of the African Group, welcomed the disarmament plan of the Secretary-General to rein in the proliferation of weapons and called for the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Guinea-Bissau

On 28 February, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2458 \(2019\)](#), by which it renewed the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) for one year, until 28 February 2020. In its resolution, the Council established that the reconfiguration of UNIOGBIS, as a simplified mission of good offices, as proposed by the Secretary-General in a special report dated 6 December 2018 ([S/2018/1086](#)), must begin after the 2019 election cycle. Under article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities of Guinea-Bissau, João Ribeiro Butiam Có, was invited to participate in the meeting. He said that the presence of UNIOGBIS had been useful and had contributed to the reforms in the areas of defence and security, justice, the rule of law, the promotion of gender equality and national reconciliation.

The Security Council urged interested parties in Guinea-Bissau to strictly respect and comply with the Conakry Agreement and the Economic Community of West African States road map and to refrain from actions and declarations that could increase tensions and incite violence.

Early in February, the Secretary-General presented his report on Guinea-Bissau and the activities of UNIOGBIS ([S/2019/115](#)). The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2048 \(2012\)](#) concerning Guinea-Bissau met on 7 February and heard from the Regional Representative of the United Nations Regional Office on Drugs and Crime for West and Central Africa, Pierre Lapaque, on drug trafficking and transnational organized crime in Guinea-Bissau and the region.

Mission to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau

On 11 February, the Security Council met in the Consultation Room to discuss a potential trip to Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Bissau proposed by Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea. The proposal was approved by Council members. Accordingly, from 14 to 16 February, the members of the Council undertook a mission to visit the countries. The trip was co-chaired by the President of the Security Council and by Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea.

In Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, Security Council members met the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Marcel Amon-Tanoh, and the Vice-President, Daniel Kablan Duncan, to assess the ongoing transition of Côte d'Ivoire from Security Council agenda item to country configuration within the Peacebuilding Commission since the departure of the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire in 2017. That was followed by a round table with the resident coordinators of the Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia United Nations country teams to consider experiences and best practices on transitions from United Nations peacekeeping operations to consolidation environments.

In Guinea-Bissau, Security Council members encouraged political actors, including the President, José Mário Vaz, to keep the date of 10 March for legislative elections, which had been delayed twice in 2018, and indicated that the presidential elections should also be organized in 2019. Members also emphasized the importance of legislative elections in order to begin institutional reforms, which the political parties of Guinea-Bissau had pledged to undertake pursuant to a stability pact signed the day before the arrival of the Council mission. Members used the visit to assess in situ the plan proposed by the Secretary-General to reconfigure and then withdraw UNIOGBIS at the end of December 2020.

Middle East

Situation in the Middle East: chemical weapons file of the Syrian Arab Republic

On 6 February, the Security Council met in the Consultation Room to address the issue of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, addressed the members of the Council, pointing out the lack of progress made in the analytical work carried out by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on the chemical weapons attack that had taken place in the north-western Syrian Arab Republic, in Idlib. The members of the Council agreed on the following: to condemn the use of chemical weapons, wherever and by whomever, to lament the delay in results and to support the work of OPCW. They also expressed their conviction that the perpetrators should be identified and held accountable for the attack in Idlib. They indicated the need for the work that OPCW was doing to be finalized and for a factual, final report to be presented.

Situation in the Middle East: humanitarian crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic

On 26 February, the Director, Operations and Advocacy Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Reena Ghelani, addressed the Security Council regarding the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions [2139 \(2014\)](#), [2165 \(2014\)](#), [2191 \(2014\)](#), [2258 \(2015\)](#), [2332 \(2016\)](#), [2393 \(2017\)](#), [2401 \(2018\)](#) and [2449 \(2018\)](#) (S/2019/157).

The Director, Operations and Advocacy Division, provided several examples of the staggering levels of need. Thousands of people fleeing the fighting were arriving at the Rukban and Hawl camps. In the north-western Syrian Arab Republic, 40 per cent of children were out of school, 2 million people relied on water supplies through truck delivery and 1.7 million people received critical aid through cross-border operations out of Turkey.

Meanwhile, the United Nations and partners continued to deliver life-saving assistance to millions of people every month, with support from the more than \$5 billion in contributions to the humanitarian response plan, the Director, Operations and Advocacy Division, said, urging Member States to ensure timely funding, while also noting that the donor conference in Brussels from 12 to 14 March would be a critical event in that regard.

The Director, Operations and Advocacy Division, stressed that it was crucial to sustain and fully implement the agreement between the Russian Federation and Turkey of September 2018 to establish a demilitarized zone in the north and said that humanitarian needs were great and constant. Although a recent 10-day mission to the Rukban camp, involving 133 trucks, arrived with essential aid, food supplies were expected to last no more than 30 days, and approximately 95 per cent of the people living there said that they wished to leave.

Security Council members displayed their differences in the debate that followed. In accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic participated in the meeting.

Situation in the Middle East: political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic

On 28 February, the Security Council met to address the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir Pedersen, informed the Council that he was optimistic regarding his new role, explaining that his recent initial meetings with all parties, without exception, had been very positive and forward-looking. Sharing a plan to move along a path to peace amid the current volatile situation on the ground, he said that his team would focus on maintaining direct and effective communication with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and stakeholders, strengthen international support and work on ways to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people. After recent discussions, he said he had sensed a wide acceptance among parties of convening a credible and balanced constitutional committee as soon as possible, which could be “a door-opener to a deeper dialogue and genuine negotiations”.

Despite a shared sense that battlefield developments might be winding down, the Special Envoy said the conflict was far from over and the challenges of winning peace were staggering in scale and complexity. Large tracts of territory remained outside Government hands, half the population was displaced and 11.7 million people needed humanitarian aid. While pleased by a humanitarian convoy that reached 40,000 internally displaced persons in Rukban and the release of detainees, he said that several challenges must be urgently addressed to avoid violence escalating and spilling across borders.

While intensive diplomacy was under way, the Special Envoy said that more must be done about the situation in the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic. He indicated that a way forward was needed to ensure the unity and territorial integrity of the country. While welcoming the fresh impetus following the recent summit between the Russian Federation and Turkey, he urged stakeholders to continue to focus on the implementation of the Memorandum on the Stabilization of the Situation in the Idlib De-escalation Area leading up to the next meeting, in Astana. For its part, the international community must ensure that international norms against chemical weapons use were respected. In addition, the growing risk of further confrontations between and the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel in the Syrian Arab Republic should not be overlooked.

Security Council members, welcoming the Special Envoy in his new role, raised several concerns, among them the need to address the humanitarian situation, release detainees, uphold the Russian-Turkish ceasefire in Idlib and forge a united path among themselves. Delegates supported the timely creation of a constitutional committee as a way to further advance peace talks. Speakers also emphasized the need to work in tandem towards common goals, pointing out a lack of progress in implementing resolutions.

Under article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic was invited to participate in the meeting, who congratulated the Special Envoy and expressed his solidarity.

Consultations on the situation in Hebron

On 6 February, the Security Council met behind closed doors in the Consultation Room, at the request of Indonesia and Kuwait, to discuss the decision of Israel regarding the renewal of the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs addressed the Council, lamenting that Israel refused to renew the mandate of the Temporary International Presence in Hebron, deployed since 1997.

Members of the Security Council agreed that the refusal of Israel to renew the mandate was bad news because it might facilitate the rise of tensions on the ground. The Council members also deemed the Temporary International Presence in Hebron necessary, given that the situation remained precarious on the ground. Members of the Council recommended that the President of the Security Council should meet with the parties (ambassadors of Israel and the State of Palestine) and pursue a field visit to the area.

Situation concerning Iraq

On 13 February, the Security Council held its 8462nd meeting, under the agenda item “The situation in Iraq”. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and the Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Jeanine Antoinette Hennis-Plasschaert, informed the Council of the most recent report of the Secretary-General and recent events in Iraq. She expressed concern about the slow pace of completing the formation of the new Government and called upon Iraqis to focus on addressing the country’s immediate needs and refrain from sectarian politics. The members of the Council showed appreciation for work of UNAMI, but also demonstrated concern with the persistence of terrorist sleeper cells and demanded accountability for perpetrators of crimes. They also encouraged the formation of a new Government and urged all parties to demonstrate a political commitment in the interest of the Iraqi people by forming a Government of national unity and supporting the State in its efforts to combat Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

The representative of Iraq was invited to participate in the meeting in accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council. He said that his Government was making progress, such as conducting transparent elections, the formation of a Government of national unity and the approval of a development plan for the period 2018–2030, which is also intended to integrate women into all the nation’s strategies to fight terrorism. The meeting was followed by informal consultations and a press release.

Situation between Iraq and Kuwait

On 19 February, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement in which cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait on the issue of missing Kuwaiti nationals and the return of missing Kuwaiti property, including its national archives, was welcomed.

Situation in the Middle East: Yemen

On 19 February, the Security Council met to assess the situation in Yemen. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, addressed the Council by videoconference from Amman. He held that there was political will in Yemen, which showed that the parties could fulfil their commitments towards the

application of the Stockholm Agreement. For his part, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, described the harsh situation faced by the population of Yemen and noted that humanitarian-related figures were worse than in 2018, with alarming levels of hunger and lack of medicines because of breaches of international humanitarian law, which were impeding access to those in need.

In accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Security Council, the representative of Yemen was invited to participate in the meeting. He thanked the efforts of the United Nations and said that his Government was working to end the conflict, despite the fact that “coup plotters” did not want to respect the Stockholm Agreement. He asked the Council to pressure the militias to respect the Agreement that they had entered into and to hold them accountable for their attacks on the civilian population. The meeting was followed by informal consultations.

On 26 February, the Security Council met to renew the sanctions regime against Yemen. The draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom was adopted unanimously as resolution [2456 \(2019\)](#).

Situation in the Middle East: the Palestinian issue

On 20 February, the Security Council held a meeting, followed by consultations, on the Middle East (Israel-State of Palestine). The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Nickolay Mladenov, addressed the Council by videoconference. He reviewed developments on the ground and said that unilateral measures, relentless violence and financial pressures were exacting a high price on Palestinian society.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller, also addressed the Security Council. She urged progress towards a political solution and pleaded with Member States to increase support for the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan. During the ensuing discussion, Council members expressed their national positions on the larger situation in the Syrian conflict, illustrating the differences that hindered any decisive action from the Council on the file.

Americas

Informal consultation on the situation in Haiti

On 21 February, the Security Council held informal consultations on the situation in Haiti, at the request of France, Germany and the United States. Council members were briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti and Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, Helen La Lime. She expressed her concerns about ongoing violence and deaths recorded during the protests in Haiti against the Government, whom the opposition blamed for the serious economic crisis engulfing the country. At the end of the meeting, the Council members agreed on a statement to signal their concern about the situation. The Council also reaffirmed its commitment to working with the people and the Government of Haiti towards a safer and more prosperous future in the country and called upon Haitians to protest peacefully against the Government.

Situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

On 26 February, the Council held its 8472nd meeting, under agenda item “The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”. The Council was informed of the

situation in the country by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. In accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, representatives of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname and Uruguay participated in the meeting.

Voting on two draft resolutions submitted by the United States and the Russian Federation on the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

On 28 February, the Security Council met to vote on two competing draft resolutions, presented by the United States and the Russian Federation, on the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. In accordance with article 37 of the provisional rules of procedure of the Council, the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was invited.

The draft resolution presented by the United States contained demands for presidential elections in and the entry of humanitarian aid into the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The voting result was nine in favour (Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States), three against (China, the Russian Federation and South Africa) and three abstentions (Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Indonesia).

The draft resolution presented by the Russian Federation contained support for a peaceful and political solution to the crisis, an insistence that the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was the only one that had the authority to request help and coordinate its entry and distribution and an expression of concern about threats of the use of force in the country and attempts to intervene in internal affairs. The voting result was 4 in favour (China, Equatorial Guinea, the Russian Federation and South Africa), 10 against (Belgium, the Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States), and 1 abstention (Côte d'Ivoire).

Europe

Cyprus

On 27 February, Security Council members issued a press statement in which the Council welcoming the meeting on 26 February between Cypriot leaders and progress on confidence-building measures.

Briefing on the situation in Ukraine

On 12 February, the Security Council held a meeting on the situation in Ukraine. The Russian Federation requested the meeting to commemorate the anniversary of the Package of Measures for the Implementation of the Minsk Agreements, adopted on 12 February 2015.

The following addressed the Security Council: the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, Miroslav Jenča; the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator; the Chief Monitor of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Special Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, Ertuğrul Apakan; and the Special Representative of the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office in Ukraine and in the Trilateral Contact Group, Martin Sajdik. The discussion was marked by long-standing divisions among permanent Council members on the subject. The Russian Federation accused Ukraine of not adhering to the Minsk Agreements and of intensifying tensions in

eastern Ukraine. On the other hand, the United States and the European members of the Council highlighted the role of the Russian Federation in the conflict and its violations of international law. Members agreed on the importance of maintaining the Minsk Agreements and the need to implement all its provisions.

Situation between Serbia and Kosovo¹ (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo)

On 7 February, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin, informed the Council of the most recent report of the Secretary-General and recent events in Kosovo. During the meeting there were, as usual, points of dissent regarding the convenience of using the Council's time on this matter. In fact, the Council had difficulties in agreeing on the programme of work for February owing to a disagreement among the members about the frequency of the Kosovo meetings, although an agreement was eventually reached.

During his briefing, the Special Representative explained how antagonistic gestures and accusations were prevailing over genuine efforts to resume political dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade and called upon both sides to steady, rather than agitate, the atmosphere as a minimum requirement.

The Special Representative went on to explain that the absence in Pristina of a unified stance on the conditions for resumed talks had raised concerns about the viability of the government coalition. Attention also focused on the 100 per cent tariff that Pristina had introduced on goods from Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia – a measure that had been challenged by many quarters and on whose revocation Belgrade had made dialogue contingent. Pristina had linked the lifting of the tax to several conditions, stressing that a forward-looking approach was essential to removing obstacles.

For its part, UNMIK had worked to foster mutual trust across communities, facilitating people-to-people engagement, but more must be done to guarantee the rights of non-majority communities, including the Ashkali, Egyptian and Roma, as well as returnees and internally displaced persons. The Special Representative pressed the Security Council to support engagement between Belgrade and Pristina, given that removing obstacles to dialogue was crucial for regional stability.

Asia

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#) held two meetings, on 13 and 21 February, to discuss the final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution [1874 \(2009\)](#). On 25 February, the Chair of the 1718 Committee, Christoph Heusgen (Germany), addressed the Council in consultations on the work of the Committee during the past three months.

Informal consultations: work of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#)

On 25 February, the Security Council met in consultations for consideration of the work of the 1718 Committee. The Chair, Christoph Heusgen, stated that the Council must continue to take action against the North Korean regime and that the

¹ References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#).

sanctions must persist until the total, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula was achieved.

The Security Council agreed that all countries must present their reports on the implementation of the sanctions imposed and that those sanctions were not an end in themselves. The Council must also ensure that they were not harmful to the population of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Equatorial Guinea used the opportunity to clarify the compliance with and implementation of sanctions that its Government was carrying out on the basis of the 1718 regime against Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Situation in Myanmar

On 28 February, the Security Council held a meeting to discuss the situation in Myanmar. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener, who had just returned from a trip to the region, briefed the Council members on the most recent developments on the ground.

The Special Envoy called for an end to violence, for unfettered humanitarian access, for efforts to tackle the root causes of tensions and for inclusive sustainable development. She also emphasized that the recently launched joint response plan for the Rohingya humanitarian crisis, aimed at supporting both refugees and host communities, required urgent funding. Fragility, tensions and violence in Myanmar, including, but not limited to, the recent crisis in Rakhine State risked jeopardizing important strides made in that country's peace process. She went on to note that the Myanmar Independent Commission of Enquiry had responded positively to her recommendation that it engage with United Nations human rights entities. In that context, she urged the international community to continue to work to build trust with the Government.

As Security Council members took the floor, differences in standing arose. Some stressed that insufficient action had been taken by the Government of Myanmar to improve the situation in Rakhine State, which would allow for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of refugees. Several called for the prompt and full implementation of the recommendations contained in the final report of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State, also known as the Annan report, and the memorandum of understanding agreed between the Government and several United Nations entities. Meanwhile, others warned that, if justice was not delivered to victims of serious crimes, the Council had the power to refer the situation to the International Criminal Court.

Thematic issues

Women and peace and security

On 8 February, there was an open meeting, in the Arria formula, in the Chamber of the Trusteeship Council on the preventive impact of criminal liability for sexual and gender-related violence related to conflict. The meeting was organized by Germany, in association with Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, South Africa and the United Kingdom. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection of Germany, Katarina Barley.

Military Staff Committee

On 8 February, the Military Staff Committee discussed the policy framework for intelligence in United Nations peacekeeping operations and the work of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti. On 22 February, it discussed the work of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei.

Briefing and consultations on threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 11 February, the Security Council met to address the issue of threats to peace and security worldwide caused by terrorist acts. The Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, and the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate, Michele Coninsx, addressed the Council with respect to the eighth report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by ISIL (Da'esh) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat ([S/2019/103](#)).

The first speaker pointed out that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant continued to be a threat to world peace and security, despite the reduction in international attacks and plots observed in 2018. For her part, the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate warned of the complexity in dealing with Islamic State in view of the fact that it was an organization that had been transformed from a local group in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to a global network with a worldwide presence, and that it remained effective in both countries and was willing to attack in a timely manner.

Members of the Security Council agreed to continue to support the Office of Counter-Terrorism in its efforts to combat terrorism and praised it as an instrumental tool in defeating Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Although the terrorist group had suffered defeats in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, much remained to be done to completely destroy it. Since the threat of terrorism did not respect borders, there must be greater international consensus. In order to do so, three recommendations were put forward: (a) disrupting financing and freezing assets of individuals and entities on the sanctions list; (b) paying special attention to women and children linked to Islamic State; and (c) ensuring accountability and taking measures to prevent radicalization.

Children in armed conflict

The Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict met on 4, 5 and 8 February to draft its conclusions on the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic ([S/2018/969](#)).

On 12 February, there was an Arria formula meeting on the protection of children affected by armed conflict in contexts where humanitarian space was being reduced, with a focus on the case of the Central African Republic. The meeting was organized by Belgium, the Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and France, in collaboration with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba.

In her comments, the Special Representative highlighted the child protection provisions that were included in the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and provided data on recent attacks against humanitarian personnel and their infrastructure. There was a panel in which the following participated: the Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations, Ambroisine Kpongo, who spoke about the steps that the

Government had taken to protect children affected by the conflict; the Senior Child Protection Adviser in the Integrated Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in MINUSCA, Natalie Ben Zakour Man; and the Director of Operations, Geneva Call, Hichem Khadhraoui. Ambassador Marc Pecsteen de Buytsverve (Belgium) acted as moderator.

Terrorism

The Security Council issued a press release on 14 February in which it condemned the terrorist attack in Sistan va Baluchestan Province, Islamic Republic of Iran, on 13 February, in which 27 people were killed and 13 others injured.

On 21 February, the Security Council issued a press release in which it condemned a suicide attack in Jammu and Kashmir on 14 February, noting that more than 40 Indian paramilitary forces had died and dozens were injured in the attack. Responsibility was attributed to Jaish-i-Mohammed.
