

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 24 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of
Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the
Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Kuwait in February 2018 (see annex). The document was prepared by the Permanent Mission of Kuwait to the United Nations, following consultations with other members of the Council, including the members during that month.

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

(Signed) Mansour **Alotaibi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 24 May 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Introduction

In February 2018, the Security Council, under the presidency of Kuwait, held 22 formal meetings, 12 informal consultations (closed) and 1 open meeting. It also adopted five resolutions and issued four press statements and three elements to the press. It also held two Arria formula meetings, one informal interactive dialogue and one “Toledo formula” meeting.

In accordance with United Nations practice, Kuwait began its presidency with the presentation of the provisional programme of work of the Security Council for the month, which was adopted at the consultations of the whole on 1 February 2018.

Middle East

Syrian Arab Republic

On 5 February 2018, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” to discuss the note by the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme contained in document [S/2018/84](#). At the meeting, the Council heard a briefing by the United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs stated that the remaining two facilities in the Syrian Arab Republic would be destroyed within two months. She stressed that there was still work to be done before Security Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) could be considered fully implemented. Continued allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic only highlighted the continuing and collective responsibility to ensure that those responsible were held to account. She called upon the Council to stand united in support of that principle.

Member States strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic by any actor and under any circumstance. They also expressed deep concern about continued allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. Most members of the Security Council regretted that the Council had been unable to preserve its most important tool for ensuring accountability for the use of chemical weapons in the country, namely, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, and all members of the Council stressed the importance of a new mechanism to ensure that there would be no impunity for those crimes.

On 14 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting on the political track in the Syrian Arab Republic, at which it heard a briefing from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura.

The Special Envoy said that the recent military escalation was undermining efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict. He reiterated the call by the United Nations for all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic, the region and beyond to immediately and unconditionally curtail the violence. He urged all concerned parties to exert influence in order to help to reduce the violence, and he affirmed his intention to promote the Geneva Communiqué of 30 June 2012, in accordance with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), as the only path to a sustainable political solution.

The Special Envoy called for support for three major tracks: (a) urgent action to reduce violence, protect civilians and ensure humanitarian access; (b) support for the United Nations in its efforts to operationalize the final statement of the Congress of the Syrian National Dialogue that was held in Sochi, the Russian Federation; and (c) support for the United Nations in moving forward on the political track towards full implementation of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#).

The members stressed the need for a political solution to the Syrian crisis through the full implementation of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), in which the Geneva Communiqué was recognized as the main basis for such a solution. They welcomed the outcomes of the Sochi conference, which provided for the formation of a constitutional drafting committee that would work within the framework of the Geneva Communiqué. All members agreed on the need for compliance with the outcomes and recognized the role of the United Nations in overseeing efforts toward any political settlement in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The session also issued elements to the press expressing the support of the Security Council for the efforts of the Special Envoy and calling for the full and immediate implementation of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) to facilitate a Syrian Arab Republic-led political transition.

On 22 February, at the request of the Russian Federation, the Security Council held a formal meeting to discuss the humanitarian situation in eastern Ghouta in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, via videoconference from Geneva.

The Under-Secretary-General reminded the Security Council of the need for action to stop the fighting and protect civilian lives. In that regard, he cited the most relevant official figures on the alarming civilian conditions and the deterioration of the humanitarian situation after most health facilities had suspended operations as a result of air strikes.

On behalf of Kuwait and Sweden (the co-pen holders of the humanitarian dossier in the Syrian Arab Republic), the representative of Sweden made a statement presenting a draft resolution put forward by the co-pen holders. The draft resolution contained calls for a nationwide cessation of hostilities for 30 days in order to allow for humanitarian access and the delivery of medical aid, as well as the lifting of sieges in all areas. Such action would address the requests of the United Nations. The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic said that his country was in the process of clearing eastern Ghouta of terrorists, as it had done in Aleppo.

On 24 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting at which it unanimously adopted resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#) concerning the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, presented by Kuwait and Sweden. The representative of Sweden made a statement on behalf of the pen holders (Kuwait and Sweden) before the vote introducing the draft. All members of the Council spoke after the vote, commending the efforts of the pen holders and their important role in achieving consensus on this critical issue. They stressed that the resolution was a first step towards improving the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and underlined the importance of ensuring its implementation.

Speaking in his capacity as the representative of Kuwait, the President of the Security Council said that the unanimous adoption of resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#) had demonstrated the importance that the pen holders had placed on achieving consensus. He stated that the resolution renewed hope in the ability of the Council to be unified and to speak with one voice, sending a clear and explicit message that it rejected any violations of the Charter of the United Nations.

On 28 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East” to consider the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Jeffrey Feltman. The topic was discussed further in informal consultations held after the formal meeting.

At the formal meeting, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator stated that, since the adoption of resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#), humanitarian agencies had been unable to deliver assistance to besieged areas or to conduct medical evacuations from eastern Ghouta. After pointing out that the resolution had not been implemented to date, he confirmed that the United Nations and its partners stood ready to intervene immediately in 10 besieged and hard-to-reach locations in the Syrian Arab Republic, including eastern Ghouta and Idlib, to provide necessary humanitarian and medical assistance. Referring to the daily five-hour truce maintained by the Russian Federation in Ghouta, he said that it was impossible to deliver assistance in such a short time. He also referred to continued air strikes and shelling in both eastern Ghouta and Damascus, which had caused the death of a number of humanitarian workers. The humanitarian situation had deteriorated in Raqqah, making it unsafe to return, as well as in Rukban and Afrin, and deaths caused by military operations had been reported in those areas. Lastly, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator stressed the importance of implementing resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#) on the ground.

The Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs confirmed that resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#) had not been implemented yet because of continued fighting in the form of air strikes and artillery shelling. He warned that resolutions of the Security Council were meaningful only if they were implemented. He referred to the letter from some opposition groups on the ground, in which they had indicated their readiness to do their part to implement the resolution. He stressed that there was no military solution to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and emphasized the need to hold accountable those who had perpetrated crimes in that country, in particular in relation to the use of chemical weapons.

Throughout his statement on behalf of the pen holders of resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#), the representative of Sweden stressed the need for the full and immediate implementation of all the provisions of the resolution. He requested that the following President of the Security Council (Netherlands) hold an open briefing on the report of the Secretary-General on the status of implementation of the resolution 15 days after its adoption and that appropriate action be taken to ensure its implementation.

The majority of the Security Council members stressed the need to fully implement the 30-day cessation of hostilities demanded in resolution [2401 \(2018\)](#) and called upon all parties with influence to ensure the observance of the cessation of hostilities throughout the Syrian Arab Republic.

Yemen

On 26 February, the Security Council held an official meeting to vote on a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to renew a sanctions regime imposed in Yemen and the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Yemen established pursuant to Security Council resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#). The draft resolution, however, was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member (Russian Federation). The Council then unanimously adopted resolution [2402 \(2018\)](#), submitted by the Russian Federation, by which it renewed the sanctions regime imposed in Yemen and the mandate of the Panel of Experts.

On 27 February, the Security Council held an official meeting under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, at which it was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, and the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, John Ging. The meeting was followed by informal consultations.

The Special Envoy announced that, for the first time, a complete and comprehensive proposal to resolve the crisis in Yemen had been put forward, in consultation with all the parties in Yemen, but that the Houthis had refused to sign it at the last minute. It was clear that the Houthis were not prepared to make concessions on the proposed security arrangements at that stage or even to go into details about a comprehensive security plan. The Special Envoy recalled that the foundations for a peace agreement had been laid during consultations in Biel, Switzerland, in 2015 and in Kuwait in 2016. Yemen had witnessed a large-scale escalation of military confrontation in recent months, specifically in Hudaydah, Jawf, Sana’a, Bayda’ and areas along the border between Yemen and Saudi Arabia, from which the Houthis continued to fire ballistic missiles into Saudi Arabia. There were also reports of the systematic recruitment of children by the Houthis.

The Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs highlighted the catastrophic humanitarian situation of the Yemeni population, with some 22 million people in need of humanitarian assistance, including 13 million in urgent need of such assistance.

He stressed the importance of allowing humanitarian access without interruption or delay, noting in that regard that the coalition was diverting a number of vessels to the port of Aden, which increased their operating costs. He pointed out that vessels inspected under the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism did not need to be inspected again and stressed the importance of keeping the ports of Hudaydah and Salif permanently open. He reported that the authorities in Sana’a were blocking the efforts of humanitarian workers, even detaining them in some cases.

He applauded the joint \$1 billion contribution by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, which included \$930 million for the humanitarian response plan for Yemen for 2018 and which the two countries had pledged to pay by 31 March 2018.

All States expressed their appreciation for the efforts of the Special Envoy during his tenure and his attempts at resolving the crisis in Yemen, and they looked forward to working with the new Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths. They also stressed the need to revive the political process in Yemen as soon as possible, stressing that it was the only way to alleviate human suffering.

The Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Yemen, Khaled Alyemany, confirmed the readiness of his Government to work with the new Special Envoy and criticized the Houthis, stating that no sovereign State could accept the presence of armed militias such as the Iranian Hizbullah within its territory, controlling part of it and using violence and heavy weaponry to hijack the State.

State of Palestine

Following the formal meeting on the Middle East, at which it heard a briefing from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, on 14 February, informal consultations were held at the request of Kuwait and the Plurinational State of Bolivia, to listen to a briefing by 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, on the fuel crisis in Gaza and its impact on the humanitarian situation.

On 20 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”, during which it heard a briefing by the Secretary-General and the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process.

The Security Council also held informal consultations following the formal meeting, at the request of the United States of America, to give an opportunity to the Advisor to the President of the United States, Jared Kushner, and the United States President’s envoy for Middle East affairs, Jason Greenblatt, to address members of the Council.

During the meeting, the Secretary-General reaffirmed that the United Nations was committed to supporting the parties in the Middle East in the efforts to reach a two-State solution, with Israel and the State of Palestine living side by side in peace and within secure and recognized borders, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. He also noted that the funding shortfall for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was an international concern and appealed to all to intensify their support for the agency.

The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process warned of the growing confidence of the enemies of peace, who saw every failure of the forces of moderation as a victory for the forces of extremism, while reaffirming that sustainable peace required a two-State solution. He also referred to the continued illegal settlement activities of Israel and called for an end to those policies. He described the security situation in the Golan Heights as a source of growing concern, especially following the targeting of a Syrian air base by an Israeli aircraft on 10 February following allegations that an Iranian aircraft had entered Israeli airspace from the Syrian Arab Republic.

During the discussions, most of the members of the Security Council stressed the importance of reaching a just, comprehensive and permanent resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on the basis of the two-State solution and the 4 June 1967 borders and ending the occupation, as set forth in the relevant Security Council resolutions and international terms of reference, including the Arab Peace Initiative and the performance-based road map to a permanent two-State solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They also expressed concern about any unilateral measures that might jeopardize the two-State solution. A number of States made reference to the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Gaza and the fear that a further escalation of violence would impede the peaceful settlement of the crisis. In their statements to the Council, a number of countries also expressed concern at the shortfall of financial resources allocated to UNRWA, an agency that provided services to more than 5 million Palestinian refugees.

In his remarks, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, stressed that he was committed to peace but would not give up on his insistence regarding the 1967 borders and the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Palestine. He called for the convening of an international peace conference in mid-2018, the outcome of which must include international recognition of the State of Palestine. He appealed to all countries to recognize the State of Palestine as a full member of the United Nations and called for a guarantee of international protection for the 13 million Palestinians living in the State of Palestine and abroad.

Iraq

On 20 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “The situation in Iraq”, during which it heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq on the report of the Secretary-General on the United

Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) pursuant to resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#), and on developments related to the search for missing Kuwaiti citizens and property, including the national archives, all efforts being undertaken by UNAMI pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution [2107 \(2013\)](#). The Council also held informal consultations following the formal meeting to continue to discuss the situation in Iraq.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq commended the efforts in support of Iraq made by Kuwait, under the leadership of the Emir, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, in particular for hosting the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq on 14 February 2018. He noted that, at the international conference, the international community mobilized nearly \$30 billion, thus demonstrating donor solidarity with and confidence in the Government and the people of Iraq.

The Permanent Representative of Iraq, Mohammed Bahr Aluloom, expressed his gratitude to Kuwait for its sincere brotherly efforts in the planning and preparation of the Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq, adding that his country was hopeful about the outcomes of the Conference and the mechanisms for their implementation, which were based on actual needs and assessments of the amount of damage sustained by basic services and infrastructure in Iraq.

The Security Council also issued elements for the press dealing with the Council's briefing on recent developments in Iraq, including the security and humanitarian conditions, preparations for the upcoming parliamentary elections and reconstruction efforts, and Kuwaiti missing persons and property, including the national archives.

Africa

The Sudan

On 8 February 2018, the Security Council held a formal meeting during which it unanimously adopted resolution [2400 \(2018\)](#) extending the sanctions measures on the Sudan and the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan for one year. Following the vote, the Permanent Representative of the Sudan made a statement.

United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau

On 14 February 2018, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled "The situation in Guinea-Bissau", during which it heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, Modibo Touré, and the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Mauro Vieira, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In his remarks, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General presented the most recent political developments that had taken place in Guinea-Bissau, noting that the political parties were not fully committed to the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau. He pointed out that the appointment of the new Prime Minister, Artur Silva, was in breach of the Agreement because it had not been accepted by the two main political parties in the country. Accordingly, sanctions had been imposed on 19 individuals for their role in impeding the implementation of the Agreement.

During the meeting, the representative of Brazil, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, reported that the Guinea-Bissau configuration was following developments in the country with great concern and that it was actively involved in providing support, in cooperation with the Embassy of Brazil in Guinea-Bissau.

In their statements, many States stressed the need to appoint a Prime Minister who was agreeable to all the parties. They also welcomed the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) sanctions, hoping that they would have a positive impact on the ground and lead to cooperation among the parties involved in the implementation of the Conakry Agreement.

The representative of Guinea-Bissau stated that the Prime Minister chosen must be agreeable to all the parties for there to be any progress in the political process. He explained that it was difficult to hold successful elections without implementing the first and essential item of the Conakry Agreement concerning the appointment of the Prime Minister.

The representative of Togo, speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of ECOWAS, outlined the recent steps taken by ECOWAS, including the sanctions that it had already imposed, and several upcoming high-level visits to evaluate progress in implementing the Conakry Agreement.

On 21 February, the Security Council issued a press statement on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, in which it expressed its deep concern over the lack of progress in the political process in the country and urged all stakeholders to fully implement the Conakry Agreement. It also called for the holding of legislative and presidential elections as scheduled during the current year and the next in accordance with local laws. It also expressed its concern about the decision of the Government to prevent peaceful assembly and stressed the need to protect freedom of assembly and expression in accordance with the country's Constitution and international human rights law.

On 28 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting during which it unanimously adopted resolution [2404 \(2018\)](#) to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau for a period of one year. The representative of Côte d'Ivoire (pen holder) made a statement before the vote, while the representatives of Equatorial Guinea, the Russian Federation and the Netherlands made statements after the vote.

United Nations Integrated Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

On 22 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled "The situation in the Central African Republic", during which it was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, the Special Envoy of the African Union for the Central African Republic, Bédializoun Moussa Nébié, and the representative of the European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic. The representative of Morocco also spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the representative of Côte d'Ivoire spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic.

Following the formal meeting, the Security Council held informal consultations to continue the discussion on the above-mentioned item.

During the open meeting of the Security Council, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic said that the security situation in the Central African Republic remained challenging but that it was moving in a much better direction than in the past. He then addressed the issue of the voluntary return of refugees to their country and cities, pointing out that they faced security challenges.

The Special Representative of the African Union to the Central African Republic said that an African Union team was in the Central African Republic and was holding meetings with government officials, political party leaders and leaders of armed groups, with a view to bringing them to the dialogue table to find solutions reached by consensus.

During the discussions, the representative of the European Union Military Training Mission thanked the members of the Security Council for taking the decision to renew the mandate of MINUSCA through resolution [2387 \(2017\)](#). He welcomed the decision of the Council to increase its military component by 900 personnel and reaffirmed the support of the European Union for the efforts of the President, Faustin Touadera, and his Government. He noted that, in the two years that the current President and the Government of the Central African Republic had been in office, cooperation with various regional organizations had contributed greatly to the deployment of the Government's armed forces and recapture of several areas that had been outside their control.

He was followed by the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, who reviewed the efforts during the past year by the Security Council Committee, of which he had been the Chair since the beginning of the year.

During the meeting, States expressed their concern at the continuation of violence and the inflammatory rhetoric that was hindering the national dialogue process and preventing the achievement of political consensus. States emphasized their rejection of armed attacks against humanitarian workers and MINUSCA. They stressed the importance of continued support by the Security Council for inclusive national dialogue in the Central African Republic and the efforts of President Touadera to ensure stability and security, reduce sectarian and ethnic tensions and create an appropriate political climate conducive to achievement of the aspirations of the citizens of the Central African Republic and their goal of peaceful coexistence.

On 27 February, the Security Council issued a press statement on the situation in the Central African Republic, in which the members of the Council renewed their support for President Touadera, and his Government and welcomed the efforts to advance the dialogue with armed groups and national reconciliation and to extend State authority in all parts of the country. They reiterated their call upon the authorities of the Central African Republic to continue their efforts to implement transparent and inclusive measures that would address the root causes of instability, allow for stabilization and reconciliation in the Central African Republic and restore the effective authority of the State over all the territory of the Central African Republic.

Somalia

On 25 February, the Security Council issued a press statement in which the members strongly condemned the terrorist attacks of 23 February on the capital, Mogadishu, that had killed and injured innocent Somalis. The members commended the swift response of the Somali security forces and the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Burundi

On 26 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “The situation in the Republic of Burundi”, during which it heard a briefing by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Michel Kafando, and the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, Jürg Lauber, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Fatima Kyari Mohammed.

The Security Council held informal consultations after the formal meeting to continue debate on the above-mentioned item.

At the formal meeting, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi briefed the Security Council on the political situation, describing it as still tense and one that had a direct impact on the economic situation. He also described the security situation in Burundi as being relatively stable, compared with that of 2015, and warned that the humanitarian situation of the Burundian people was deteriorating significantly.

The Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission noted that he would be visiting Burundi shortly and pledged to focus on three key issues in his discussions with the Burundian authorities: (a) support for the mediation efforts of the East African Community and international efforts to hold free, fair and democratic elections in 2020; (b) the need for a national dialogue on the situation in Burundi that included all political actors; and (c) a focus on improving the humanitarian situation of the Burundian people.

The representative of Burundi stated that the most recent special report of the Secretary-General on the situation in his country contained inaccurate information. He cited paragraphs that fell outside the remit of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, the most important of which concerned the presidential elections and the referendum scheduled for next May. Those were all issues that were clearly part of the internal affairs of Burundi and should be determined by the people of Burundi alone.

United Nations Mission in South Sudan

On 27 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “Reports of the Secretary-General on South Sudan”, at which it was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and the Special Envoy for South Sudan of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Ismail Wais. Elements for the press were issued after the meeting.

The Security Council held informal consultations after the formal meeting to continue discussion on the item.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations said that the humanitarian situation in South Sudan was deteriorating, even within United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) protection of civilians sites. Turning to the incident of sexual assault perpetrated against women in the city of Wau by Ghanaian police personnel serving in UNMISS, she noted that the Mission took immediate action to remove from duty and transfer the entire unit of 46 Ghanaian police officers in order to protect the victims and witnesses.

The Special Envoy for South Sudan of IGAD discussed the developments of the high-level revitalization forum for the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The second phase of the forum would be held from 5 to 16 February. All parties participating in that phase, with the exception of the

Government of South Sudan, had agreed on a declaration of principles addressing a number of issues, including the punitive measures to be taken against anyone hindering the political process and violating the ceasefire agreement of December 2017.

The representative of South Sudan rejected repeated calls for sanctions against his country, which had known peace for only fewer than three years before the current war. He demanded that protection of civilians sites should be free of weapons. He then stated that the Government had decided not to sign the declaration of principle, given that doing so was optional. He reiterated his Government's support for the high-level forum but characterized the forum's demands as unrealistic and accused the opposition of refusing to cooperate with efforts to reach a political solution.

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

On 28 February, the Security Council issued a press statement regarding the terrorist attack carried out in the city of Mopti on 28 February. The statement condemned the terrorist attack against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. The attack killed four Bangladeshi peacekeepers.

Asia

Myanmar

On 13 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled "The situation in Myanmar". The Council heard briefings by the High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, and the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Miroslav Jenča.

The Security Council held informal consultations after the formal meeting to continue discussion on the situation in Myanmar.

Speakers, including United Nations representatives, concurred that a number of steps must be taken to mitigate the humanitarian crisis affecting the Rohingya minority. In that connection, they called for an immediate end to the violence and for improving the security environment in Rakhine State, including by ending the practice of using threats and intimidation to deal with the Rohingya minority. They also stated that ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected areas in Rakhine State, alongside efforts to bring about the voluntary and sustainable return of refugees to their place of origin or area of their choice, would guarantee their safety and preserve their dignity. The discussions touched on ways of addressing the root causes of the displacement of Rohingya refugees, including upholding their citizenship rights, in line with the relevant recommendations of the United Nations and the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State. It was stressed that the Government of Myanmar had the primary responsibility for ensuring the security and safety of the Rohingya minority.

The representative of Myanmar gave an overview of the successes achieved by his country in bringing about security and economic stability in Rakhine State and expressed his country's willingness to continue to cooperate with the United Nations. He added that his country was working to hold the perpetrators of crimes against the Rohingya minority accountable and noted that the question of mass graves had been investigated, but that no evidence had been found to confirm their existence to date.

The representative of Bangladesh highlighted the challenges facing his country in hosting Rohingya refugees, noting the unabated influx of refugees across the border. He added that refugees wished for a number of safeguards before returning

home, namely, a return to permanent residence in their regions of origin, not to refugee camps or temporary housing complexes; restoration of their land, property and livelihoods; the right to local market access; and freedom of movement and the resumption of a normal life.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 26 February, the Security Council held informal consultations to consider the quarterly report of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#) concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Subsequently, the Council discussed the date of the election to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of the President of the International Court of Justice.

Europe

United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo

On 7 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled "Security Council resolutions [1160 \(1998\)](#), [1199 \(1998\)](#), [1203 \(1998\)](#), [1239 \(1999\)](#), and [1244 \(1999\)](#)". The Council heard a briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, Zahir Tanin, concerning the report of the Secretary-General ([S/2018/76](#)).

The Special Representative explained that, on 6 February, the European Union had adopted a new strategy for the western Balkans that would require Kosovo to do more to establish the rule of law, reduce corruption, eradicate organized crime, resolve bilateral disputes and normalize dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina.

He urged the relevant parties to withdraw the request to abrogate the law that supported the work of the Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor's Office in Kosovo, noting that any attempt to revoke or amend the mandate of the Specialized Chambers would adversely affect relations between Kosovo and the European Union.

The representative of Serbia welcomed the Special Representative's reaction to the murder of Kosovo Serb political leader Oliver Ivanović. The Special Representative had condemned that act, characterizing it as gruesome and had called for a speedy and resolute investigation. He also noted that the President of Serbia had visited northern and central Kosovo on 21 and 22 January, in the aftermath of that terrorist act, in order to call on the two sides to maintain stability, peace and calm, emphasizing that all problems must be solved through dialogue.

The representative of Kosovo explained that all parties should observe the manner in which Kosovo society and media had reacted to the assassination of Mr. Ivanović, noting that the assassination had been a murder that had not incited ethnic hatred in Kosovo. She added that local citizens and Albanian and Serbian media had agreed that organized crime in northern Kosovo had been to blame for the murder.

Thematic issues

Open debate on the working methods of the Security Council

On 6 February, the Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled "Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#))", at which it was briefed by the Executive Director of Security Council Report, Ian Martin.

The Executive Director reported that recent developments in Security Council practice had led to advances in the transparency and effectiveness of its work. He cited as examples the General Assembly resolution allowing for the early election of non-permanent Council members and the subsequent note by the President of the Security Council inviting newly elected members to observe all meetings of the Council and its subsidiary bodies, in addition to informal consultations, for a period of three months beginning on 1 October, immediately preceding their terms of membership. That would be a vital contribution to their ability to prepare for membership.

The Executive Director expressed concern about the pen holder system, in particular with regard to the manner in which it had narrowed the scope for initiatives by elected Security Council members. The note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#)), or Note 507, had reiterated that any member of the Council may be a penholder and that more than one member may act as co-pen holder. In practice, however, three permanent members (the United States, the United Kingdom and France) remained sole pen holders on the overwhelming majority of topics on the Council agenda. He stressed that the quality of negotiations related to Council documentation and their outcomes were of supreme importance to the effectiveness of the Council. Here, he pointed out that the most recent revision of Note 507 had addressed that issue more fully than its predecessors. It provided that the drafting should be carried out in an inclusive manner that would allow the participation of all Council members. Furthermore, it stressed that there should be at least one round of discussions with all members before a document was formally issued and that all members should be given sufficient time to consider the document.

Terrorism

On 8 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”. The Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, on the sixth 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/2018/80](#)), pursuant to paragraph 101 of Security Council resolution [2368 \(2017\)](#). The Council held informal consultations after the formal meeting to continue discussion on the item and then discussed recent developments in Maldives.

The Under-Secretary-General called upon Security Council members to redouble their efforts to strengthen international cooperation in order to address terrorism and violent extremism. He noted that Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant was presently focused on recruiting individuals who sympathized with the organization or shared some of its tendencies, instead of on conquering and holding territory.

He added that the flow of foreign terrorist fighters had come to a halt as a result of international efforts. Consequently, foreign terrorist fighters were returning to their countries and relocating to other regions, posing a threat to global security.

On 13 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”. The Council heard a briefing by the Permanent Representative of Peru and Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#) concerning counter-terrorism, Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, concerning counter-terrorism.

The Chair of the Security Council Committee noted that it was important to ensure the protection of critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks for the benefit of national security and public safety. In that connection, the Council, in its resolution

2341 (2017), had called upon Member States to consider developing or further improving their strategies for reducing risks to critical infrastructure from terrorist attacks. Such strategies should include, among other things, assessing and raising awareness of the relevant risks and taking appropriate measures.

He turned to the efforts of the Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, which played a key role in promoting international cooperation and identifying related gaps, vulnerabilities, trends and existing good practices. He commended the contributing role of the Directorate in a number of initiatives, including the European Programme for Critical Infrastructure Protection, the Declaration on the Protection of Critical Infrastructure from Emerging Threats, issued by the States members of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States, and the role of the Commonwealth of Independent States Anti-Terrorism Center.

Ministerial-level briefing on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations

On 21 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting under the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security: purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security”. The Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General and by former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to the Government of Kuwait for organizing the briefing and for hosting the International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq. He noted that February marked the twenty-seventh anniversary of the liberation of Kuwait from the forces of Saddam Hussein by upholding the Charter, and it was that occasion which served as a fitting historical backdrop to the Council deliberation on the topic. He stressed that the purposes and principles of the Charter remained enormously important, notwithstanding the evolving nature of present-day global challenges. He indicated that the drivers of conflict had become more complex. Turning to the issues of migration, climate change and the lack of justice, he said that those challenges would test the Charter itself and the Council’s capacity to deal with them. He underscored the importance of updating the tools available to the Council under the Charter and of using those tools with greater determination.

The Secretary-General said that he was deeply saddened by the suffering of the civilian population in eastern Ghouta, where, he said, “400,000 people live in hell on Earth”. He added that he was aware that consultations aimed at achieving a cessation of hostilities in the Syrian Arab Republic for a month were taking place in the Council and that he supported that effort. He believed, however, that the situation in eastern Ghouta could not wait. He therefore called for an immediate suspension of all war activities in Ghouta, allowing humanitarian aid to reach all those in need and for the evacuation of an estimated 700 people who needed urgent treatment. In closing, he stressed that the situation was a human tragedy that could not be allowed to persist.

The former Secretary-General focused on the situation on the Korean peninsula following the nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches conducted by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, a situation that he characterized as the world’s most dangerous at present. He noted that the Winter Olympics had been celebrated in Pyeongchang, Republic of Korea. He hailed the power of sports in contributing to peace and development and, against that backdrop, warmly welcomed the participation of athletes of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea in the Winter Olympics held in the Republic of Korea. He emphasized that the entire United Nations membership should faithfully and thoroughly implement the 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change, while coping with other new challenges, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, among others.

The former Secretary-General addressed the factors of instability in the Middle East, in particular the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the refugee crisis; tensions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Saudi Arabia, on the one hand, and between and the Islamic Republic of Iran and Israel, on the other; and violence between Israel and Hizbullah in Lebanon. He said that the “division” among States members of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf was of serious concern. In that regard, he commended the mediating role played by the Emir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The President of the Security Council, Kuwait, represented by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Sabah Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, highlighted the liberation of Kuwait as an example of the international community’s commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and the ability of the Council to address an aggression that was aimed at undermining the Charter.

A number of Security Council members did highlight the liberation of Kuwait from the Iraqi occupation in 1991 as an example of the Council fulfilling one of its main purposes, namely, to maintain international peace and security. The members also discussed the importance of utilizing the tools at their disposal, including the pacific settlement of disputes, as outlined in Chapter VI of the Charter, and regional arrangements, as outlined in Chapter VIII. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and that they remained valid and relevant, even as the challenges and threats to peace and security were more complex than before.

International Court of Justice

On 28 February, the Security Council held a formal meeting, at which resolution [2403 \(2018\)](#) was adopted without a vote. Pursuant to that resolution, the Council decided that the election to fill the vacancy in the International Court of Justice following the resignation of Judge Hisashi Owada (Japan) would be held on 22 June 2018.