



## Security Council

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### **Letter dated 9 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa 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 for the month of October 2019, during the presidency of the Republic of South Africa (see annex).

The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of South Africa to the United Nations. While other members of the Council have been consulted, the assessment 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) Jerry **Matjila**  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative of South Africa



## **Annex to the letter dated 9 March 2020 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

### **Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the Presidency of the Republic of South Africa (October 2019)**

#### **Introduction**

Under the presidency of the Republic of South Africa in October 2019, the Security Council held 25 public meetings, including 2 open debates, as well as 2 private meetings, 16 informal consultations and 6 consultations of the whole under the item “any other business”.

The Security Council adopted five resolutions and agreed upon two presidential statements and eight press statements. Signature events of the presidency of South Africa included a debate on “Peace and security in Africa: mobilising youth towards silencing the guns by 2020”; a debate on “Peace and security in Africa: the centrality of preventive diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution” and an open debate on women and peace and security.

In accordance with the Organization’s practice, South Africa began its presidency with the presentation of the provisional programme of work of the Security Council for the month, which was adopted at the Council’s consultations on 1 October 2019.

#### **Africa**

On 2 October, the Security Council held a debate on “Peace and security in Africa: mobilizing the youth towards silencing the guns by 2020”, which focused on the positive role played by African youth in peace processes. The meeting was enriched by the contributions of African youth leaders, including the African Union Special Envoy On Youth, Aya Chebbi. In remarks by members of the Council, there was optimism about the youth demographic of the continent but also the recognition that this youth demographic would require significant investment and support, through appropriate initiatives centred on education, training, entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.

#### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

On 3 October, the Security Council received a briefing on the situation in the Great Lakes region and the implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region. It was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region, Huang Xia. He informed the Council that much progress had been achieved with respect to governance and regional cooperation in the Great Lakes Region. This included the formation of a new government by the country’s recently elected President, Félix Tshisekedi, as well as steps taken by President Tshisekedi to advance regional cooperation. The efforts of regional countries, Angola, Rwanda and Uganda, aimed at addressing instability in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, were commended. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General appealed to members of the Council to support an upcoming conference on the region’s development, which was due to take place in Kigali. Following the briefing, the Council held consultations on the issue. Members of the Council generally expressed their support for the progress described in the Great Lakes Region, including in Burundi. However, some members

of the Council sounded a more cautious note, emphasizing the need for good governance in the region and mentioning the specific need for improvements in the rule of law and freedom of expression in Burundi in particular, which they urged the Council to monitor closely. The Council reiterated its support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General in fulfilling his mandate to promote peace and stability in the region.

On 9 October, the Security Council met to discuss the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Leila Zerrougui. Her briefing focused on the political and security situation, as well as on activities of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). She described positive developments in the country, with the peaceful transition of power that had seen the formation of the country's new coalition government. She appealed to the international community to support the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes Region at large, in consolidating these gains. She also mentioned a reduction in the number of Ebola cases, due to cooperative efforts between Kinshasa and partners. However, she noted with deep concern recent attacks by armed groups against civilians in some parts of the country, demanding accountability for the perpetrators. The members of the Council generally expressed optimism at the positive developments highlighted by the Special Representative, while sharing her concern about the instances of violence, as well as issues such as human rights concerns and the continued Ebola epidemic. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Council adopted a press statement, recalling that individuals and entities engaging in, or providing support for acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, constitutes a basis for sanctions designations pursuant to Council resolution [2293 \(2016\)](#), among other designation criteria.

### **Sudan/South Sudan**

On 3 October, the Security Council received a briefing from the Chair of the Sudan Sanctions Committee about the implementation of sanctions in Darfur. The Council was informed that the security situation in Darfur remained characterized by intercommunal skirmishes, militia attacks on civilians, tensions in camps for internally displaced persons and other localized security incidents, although there have not been any large-scale outbreaks of violence.

On 15 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2492 \(2019\)](#), which extended until 15 November 2019 the support provided by the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism of the Sudan and South Sudan.

On 17 October, the Security Council met to consider the special report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur ([S/2019/816](#)). The meeting was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, who expressed positive sentiments about progress towards peace in the country. He urged the Council to lend its further support in consolidating and building on these gains. He informed the Council that indicators of this progress were the signing of the Juba Declaration for Confidence-building Procedures and the Preparation for Negotiation by the new Sovereign Council of the Sudan and a number of armed groups. This would pave the way for a countrywide peace process and was expected to conclude in a peace agreement by 14 December 2019. On the question of the UNAMID drawdown, he proposed that the Mission be adapted into a smaller operation, focused on five problem areas. He pointed out that Darfur continued to experience some clashes between security forces and a resistant armed movement, in addition to displacement and criminality. He also reiterated the

Secretary-General's call for the lifting of all economic and financial sanctions imposed on the Sudan, as well as its removal from the list of State sponsors of terrorism, and for a stepped-up economic partnership with the country. In their remarks, members of the Security Council were optimistic that the positive developments described could signal a new chapter for the country. Some members also remarked on the UNAMID drawdown, expressing the view that the drawdown should take place in strict accordance with previous Security Council resolutions. A number of delegates emphasized the need for the strategy for the UNAMID drawdown to prioritize continued protection of civilians.

On 24 October, the Security Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations about the latest developments with regard to UNISFA. In his briefing, Mr. Lacroix emphasized that increased cooperation between the Sudan and South Sudan, across a number of areas, could allow for an opportunity to see the two countries achieve progress on the status of the disputed territory of Abyei. He reported that a lack of progress on joint policing efforts in the territory had seen an increase in criminality, as well as the presence of armed groups in the area. He emphasized the need for both countries to implement the outcomes of the border management discussions, as well as improve capabilities in intelligence, protection, engineering and medical capacity and civilian expertise. Commenting on the reconfiguration of UNISFA, he expressed a preference for a delayed reduction of troops until April 2020 and welcomed the planned deployment of United Nations police in January 2020. The meeting was also briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, who briefed the Council via video teleconference from Addis Ababa. He expressed optimism about the increased cooperation between the Sudan and South Sudan, including high-level discussions on arrangements concerning oil, the possibility of new border crossing points, the redeployment of forces from the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone and the full deployment of the Monitoring Mechanism. In their remarks, the members of the Council expressed their support for the role of UNISFA in providing protection and stability in Abyei and agreed that the reconfiguration of the Mission, should take place with careful attention to the needs on the ground. Some members called on the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan to provide full support to UNISFA in the deployment of its personnel.

On 31 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2495 \(2019\)](#), extending the mandate of UNAMID by a year, until 31 October 2020.

### **Preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution**

On 7 October, the Security Council held a debate at the initiative of South Africa, on the centrality of preventative diplomacy, conflict prevention and resolution in the context of peace and security in Africa. The meeting was addressed by a number of speakers, including members of civil society and regional organizations, as well as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres. The overall focus of the debate was on the importance of prioritizing Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, emphasizing the peaceful settlement of disputes and deploying preventative diplomacy tools available to the Council, such as the good offices of the Secretary-General. In general, speakers welcomed the positive efforts and outcomes of processes on the African continent which are attempting to resolve tensions and conflicts via preventative, dialogue-driven, diplomatic means.

### **Mali**

On 8 October, the Security Council met to discuss the situation in Mali, and in particular the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The Council received a

briefing from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, and the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali, José Singer Weisinger (Dominican Republic). The Special Representative's briefing focused on the political process, security situation and socioeconomic development in the country. He noted some progress with regard to the political process, including consultations with various stakeholders prior to the launch of the inclusive national dialogue on 16 September 2019. He urged Council members to encourage the parties that have suspended participation to rejoin the national dialogue. He highlighted that security threats had reduced in local communities during the reporting period; however, he noted that there were rising tensions in central Mali and made specific reference to tensions in a community near the border with Burkina Faso. He indicated that the challenges with accelerated disarmament, demobilization and reintegration have tainted the process. Regarding issues of accountability, he highlighted that communities do not have confidence in the Malian authorities.

The Chair of the Committee reported on the meetings of the Committee, notably with the Panel of Experts on Mali and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. He also indicated that five additional individuals had been listed on the sanctions list for obstructing the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. The number of listed persons had thereby increased to eight. He informed the Council about the Committee's visit to Mali from 16 to 18 October 2019, to interact with MINUSMA, Malian authorities, the Monitoring Mechanism, the Panel of Experts and other relevant stakeholders. Statements by members of the Council were mutually reinforcing in welcoming the national dialogue and gradual progress in the implementation of some provisions of the Peace Agreement. However, Council members called on the Malian authorities to do more to implement the Peace Agreement in totality. The meeting resulted in the adoption of a press statement firmly urging all the stakeholders to conduct the inclusive national dialogue with a broad consensus, as well as proposing, *inter alia*, sanctions on those that obstruct or threaten the implementation of the peace agreement, while recognizing that the responsibility in this regard lies primarily with the Malian authorities.

### **Guinea-Bissau**

On 10 October, the Security Council held consultations in which it received a briefing on the political situation and the current electoral process in Guinea-Bissau. The Council adopted a press statement expressing, *inter alia*, its intention to monitor the developments in the country closely, reiterating the need to support the current Government, which was formed following the legislative elections of 10 March 2019. It further expressed support for the Government's mandate to manage governmental affairs and organize presidential elections. It also encouraged political actors to use legal and constitutional procedures to address any electoral disputes and refrain from acts of violence, hatred or aggression in order to ensure stability and the consolidation of peace in Guinea-Bissau.

On 31 October, the Security Council, at the request of Côte d'Ivoire, the pen holder for Guinea-Bissau, called for closed consultations to discuss the evolving political situation in the country. The Security Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau, Rosine Sori-Coulibaly via video link. In her briefing, she expressed great concern at the deterioration of the political situation, three weeks ahead of the Presidential polls. She raised the alarm about the potential collapse and spoiling of elections as a result of an unfolding political situation which had seen the dismissal of the Prime Minister and Government. The

members of the Council were unanimous in calling for calm and restraint in Guinea-Bissau and the need for the presidential elections to take place on 24 November 2019, as agreed. They also called for the military to refrain from engaging in political disputes. Consequently, members of the Council issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/2019/13) expressing deep concern at the social and political unrest in the country and calling on actors in the country to maintain stability and respect directives of the African Union and Economic Community of West African States.

### **Western Sahara**

On 8 October, the Security Council held a private meeting with troop- and police-contributing countries to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The meeting was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), Colin Stewart, who also engaged in an exchange of views with members of the Council and representatives of participating contributing countries.

On 16 October, the Security Council discussed the situation in Western Sahara, in the context of the expiration, at the end of October 2019, of the mandate of MINURSO. It was expected that the mandate would be renewed for a period of twelve months, and this received support from most Council members. The meeting also considered the report of the Secretary-General of 3 October 2019, as required by resolution 2440 (2018), as well as developments related to the political and security situation in the Western Sahara territory. The meeting was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Bintou Keita, as well as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). The briefings focused on processes to appoint a new Special Envoy and described developments, with Morocco having affirmed its commitment to the political process and FRENTE Polisario its commitment to confidence-building measures to move the process forward. In his briefing, the Special Representative indicated that the situation in the territory remained calm, although political tensions persist. He informed the Council that the five violations by Morocco mentioned in the previous report of the Secretary-General were addressed by MINURSO and that since the briefing in April there had been no violations by Morocco. He noted MINURSO was working on a new mechanism with the FRENTE Polisario to ensure that they also refrained from any violations and respected the ceasefire. The members of the Security Council expressed their appreciation for the contribution of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, who had resigned, and urged the swift appointment of his successor to ensure that the political process between the parties retained its momentum. They also called on all parties to remain committed to the political processes. The mandate renewal for MINURSO was adopted for a period of 12 months, with 13 votes in favour and 2 abstentions (Russian Federation and South Africa). In their explanations of vote, the majority of Security Council members expressed support for the 12-month extension of MINURSO's mandate.

### **South Sudan**

On 20 October, South Africa and the United States of America co-led a mission of the Security Council to the South Sudan. The visit afforded the Security Council the opportunity to engage with a range of interlocutors, which included the signatories to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. This included the Government of the Republic of South Sudan, representatives of opposition political parties and key stakeholder groups, including those representing women and youth. Members of the Security Council conveyed their strong support for the peace process in South Sudan and urged parties to the

Revitalized Agreement to resolve outstanding issues to allow for the peaceful formation of a Revitalized Transitional Government of National Unity by the deadline of 12 November 2019.

### **Thirteenth annual joint consultative meeting between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council**

On 21 and 22 October, South Africa led the Security Council mission to Addis Ababa, where Council members participated in the thirteenth annual joint consultative meeting. They were able to exchange views with the African Union Peace and Security Council on developments related to the situations in Libya, South Sudan and the Central African Republic, as well as the Sahel region. There was convergence on a number of issues, while on others, members committed to continue working to find common ground.

The Security Council members and the Peace and Security Council also met in the context of the fourth informal seminar. The informal seminar provided both Councils the opportunity to engage and exchange views on topical issues relevant to the work and mandates of both institutions, which included silencing the guns in Africa by 2020 as well as modalities for conducting joint field missions in Africa. The discussions highlighted a range of proposals and ideas from the members of both Councils towards further shaping effective collaboration between the two Councils.

### **Central African Republic**

On 25 October, the Security Council met on the situation in the Central African Republic. At the meeting, the Council considered document [S/2019/822](#), containing the report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic. The Council was briefed by Mankeur Ndiaye, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). Mr. Ndiaye appealed to the Security Council to renew the mandate of MINUSCA, which was due to expire. He emphasized the importance of the mandate renewal, as well as the broader support of the international community, in the context of the delicate phase in which the country found itself, as it prepared for elections in 2020 and 2021. Mr. Ndiaye highlighted the progress made in the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, as well as the Government's efforts to extend the State's authority throughout its territory. However, he cautioned that significant challenges remained, including human rights violations and violence by certain armed groups in the country's north-east.

The Commissioner for Peace and Security African Union, Smaïl Chergui, and the Director for Integrated Approach for Security and Peace of the European Union, Stefano Tomat, also briefed the meeting via video-teleconference from Addis Ababa and Brussels respectively. In his remarks, Mr. Chergui welcomed regional cooperation in repatriating some 350,000 refugees between January and September 2019 and urged stakeholders to remain focused on the humanitarian situation in the country. Mr. Tomat's briefing covered aspects to which the European Union believed the Government should attend, including transitional justice and the greater incorporation of civil society, political parties, military and women into the peace process. He indicated that the European Union also wanted to see the deployment of more special joint security units, stressing the critical need to demobilize, disarm, vet and train combatants. Among the contributions from members of the Security Council, the three African members expressed their view that sanctions imposed on the country needed to be lifted.

## **Somalia**

On 25 October, the Security Council was briefed by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations and Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [751 \(1992\)](#) concerning Somalia, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve. His briefing focused on the work of the Committee in the period from 27 June to 25 October 2019. He echoed the findings of a briefing by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs earlier in the month, in which it had noted some progress on the political, economic, humanitarian and security fronts in the country, while noting that it remained vulnerable to climatic shocks and escalations in conflict. His briefing also echoed the findings of the Panel of Experts on Somalia earlier in the month, noting the continued risk posed to Somalia and the broader region by the activities of Al-Shabaab. The Panel had encouraged targeted sanctions to deter destructive behaviour in Somalia, by arms traffickers, charcoal dealers, terrorism financiers and political spoilers. In his briefing, the Chair further emphasized the need to streamline, update and simplify the arms embargo on Somalia, and prevent the import of components and chemical precursors that Al-Shabaab could use to construct improvised explosive devices. He highlighted the findings of the Head of the Global Maritime Crime Programme, who had briefed the Committee and described a complex connection between transnational organized crime and terrorism in Somalia, through links between Al-Shabaab and crime syndicates. In their reactions, several members of the Security Council expressed concern that the Government of Somalia and the Panel failed to cooperate with each other, sounding the alarm over the implications of such inaction for regional peace and security.

## **Burundi**

On 30 October, the Security Council was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, the former President of Burkina Faso, Michel Kafando, and the Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, Jürg Lauber. The Permanent Representative of Burundi also participated and delivered a statement on behalf of his Government. At the meeting, the Special Envoy announced that his tenure had come to an end and presented a brief summary of his achievements over the previous two years. All Council members thanked him for his efforts and his work with Burundian stakeholders and welcomed the latest Secretary-General's report. In his briefing, the Special Envoy described the situation in Burundi as tense, with continued infringements of civil liberties. However, he commended certain positive initiatives by the Government towards a peaceful, inclusive election. On the inter-Burundian Dialogue, the Special Envoy described a stalled process as a result of a lack of political will. In his briefing, the Chair of the Burundi Configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission provided an overview of the work of the Configuration and its shared commitment to the May 2020 elections, highlighting the need for an appropriate political environment to avoid a slowdown in socioeconomic development. The reactions by the members of the Security Council illustrated a divergence of views on the situation. While some members were critical of the Government of Burundi and alleged political repression and human rights violations, other members believed that the situation in Burundi was not a threat to international peace and security and therefore continued to call for Burundi to be removed from the agenda of the Security Council.

## **Middle East**

### **The situation in the Middle East**

On 8 October, the Security Council adopted a Presidential Statement ([S/PRST/2019/12](#)) welcoming the Secretary-General's announcement of an

agreement for a credible, balanced and inclusive Syrian Constitutional Committee, facilitated by the United Nations in Geneva. The agreement had been reached between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the Syrian Negotiations Commission on 23 September 2019. In its presidential statement, the Security Council stated that the launch of the Syrian-owned and Syrian-led Constitutional Committee should be the beginning of the political process to end the Syrian conflict, in line with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), that meets the legitimate aspirations of all Syrians.

On 16 October, the Security Council held consultations on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Syrian Golan. The meeting was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, on the basis of the quarterly report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF. His briefing informed the Council that the situation remained relatively stable, with the ceasefire being maintained within a volatile environment. He highlighted the important liaison role of UNDOF, especially with regard to de-escalating tensions due to Israel's erection of razor wire barriers. He informed the Council that the continued violation of the ceasefire line and unexploded ordinance jeopardized the safety of United Nations forces. He also called for the safe, unimpeded movement of United Nations forces within the area of separation. He reported that the positive progress in the full redeployment of UNDOF to the Bravo side of the separation area continued, with UNDOF having reoccupied a number of posts in the south and west of the area of separation. It was noted that the Department of Peace Operations was undertaking a military capability study to re-evaluate the military requirements of UNDOF.

On 17 October, the Security Council held its monthly briefing and consultations on the situation in Yemen. It was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock. The Special Envoy described some positive developments, which included signs of greater willingness to cooperate by the parties, progress in facilitating the movement of much-needed oil supplies and the release of 290 detainees by Ansar Allah (Houthis). He informed the Council that he had invited the parties to meet with the United Nations and its partners, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, at the earliest opportunity to resume discussions on further releases, as laid out in the December 2018 Stockholm Agreement. In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs informed the Council that humanitarian access remained challenging, in particular in the north, owing to restrictions imposed by Ansar Allah, which has also expelled and refused entry to some United Nations personnel. In their reactions, members of the Security Council continued to call for the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement and welcomed the financial contributions made to humanitarian assistance in Yemen by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. Members of the Security Council also welcomed the announcement by the Houthis that they would cease cross-border attacks against Saudi Arabia, as part of confidence-building measures, and called on all parties to exercise restraint and to work towards a political process to resolve the conflict. Most members of the Security Council also welcomed the ongoing mediation efforts and expressed the hope that an agreement would be reached, as talks continued in Jeddah under the leadership of Saudi Arabia.

On 24 October, the Security Council held its monthly briefing on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. It was briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ursula Mueller, the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mohamed Khaled Khiari, and the Director of the Mine Action Service in the Department of Peace Operations, Agnès Marcaillou.

## **Israel/Palestine**

On 28 October, the Security Council convened its quarterly open debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. It received a briefing from the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov. He reported that the situation on the ground continued to deteriorate, with the prospects of final negotiations and the possibility of a two-State solution distant. The illegal occupation and expansion of settlement activity continued, with Israel advancing plans for additional housing units in Area C of the West Bank (over which Israel maintains near-exclusive control, including in terms of law enforcement, planning and construction) and demolishing and/or seizing Palestinian property and land. The Special Coordinator reiterated that those activities were all obstacles to peace. It was also stated that settler-related violence continued, in particular in the West Bank, against Palestinian farmers during the olive harvest. With regard to the situation in Gaza, the Special Coordinator again highlighted that the humanitarian situation remained dire. He also welcomed the announcement by President Mahmoud Abbas during the General Assembly that he intended to set a date for elections in the near future. Most members of the Security Council and Member States that spoke reiterated their support for a two-State solution as the only viable path to peace in the region and condemned the continued expansion of illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. They also expressed their support for the work of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), and its important role in Gaza in particular.

## **Syrian Arab Republic (chemical weapons)**

On 11 October, the Security Council held its monthly meeting to assess the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The meeting was briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu. She reported that there had been limited progress since the previous Council meeting on 4 September 2019. She indicated that the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons had reiterated the Organization's commitment to continue to work with the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to resolve all outstanding issues, including the reported incidences of chemical weapons use. She reported that there was a planned meeting between the two parties from 14 to 21 October 2019.

## **Europe**

### **Cyprus**

On 9 October, the Security Council met to discuss the situation in Cyprus in the context of reports about the intention of the Government of Turkey to open a Consulate-General in the wider Varosha area, following an alleged exchange between Turkey and Turkish Cypriot leaders. During the consultations, a call was made for all the Cypriot parties to return to dialogue in order to resolve the situation, as well as other issues hindering the resolution of the broader Cypriot political crisis. Following the meeting a Council press statement was issued, in which the Council recalled the importance of the status of Varosha as set out in previous Council resolutions, including resolution 550 (1984) and resolution 789 (1992), and reiterated that no actions should be carried out in relation to Varosha that are not in accordance with those resolutions. It also reaffirmed resolution 2483 (2019) and the importance of an enduring, comprehensive and just settlement based on a bicomunal, bizonal federation with political equality, as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions. In the press statement, the Council also called on the parties to engage constructively, and with a sense of urgency, as well as encouraging the leaders to agree on and

implement new confidence-building measures, and urging the sides and all involved participants to refrain from any actions and rhetoric that might damage the chances of success for a settlement.

### **Kosovo**

On 31 October, the Security Council met for a briefing on the situation in Kosovo. The meeting was briefed by Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Zahir Tanin. In his briefing to the Security Council, he referred to the recent parliamentary elections, which had been held in a highly divided, adversarial political context. He noted that preliminary results indicated a victory for the two main opposition parties, who were exploring coalition options. Additionally, Kosovo-Serb majority areas had seen the highest-recorded voter turnout in recent times, showing a trend of active participation by that community in Kosovo elections. In his briefing, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General also provided an update on a security incident on 28 May 2019 in which two UNMIK staff were arrested by Kosovo police. Some members of the Council expressed the view that all the goals laid out in resolution [1244 \(1999\)](#) as part of the Mission's mandate had been achieved and argued that there was no longer a need for a peacekeeping mission in the country. Other members, however highlighted their unease with the current political situation and expressed the concern that if UNMIK was withdrawn, Kosovo would deteriorate into lawlessness.

### **Americas**

#### **Colombia**

On 10 October, the Security Council met to discuss the situation in Colombia and developments around the implementation of the peace agreement. Following the briefing and consultations, members of the Council issued a press statement in which it deplored the recent announcement by a group of former leaders of the rebel Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) that they would return to armed activity. The Council welcomed the swift rejection of this action by the Government, FARC and other political parties and civil society. The Council reiterated its full and unanimous support for the peace process in Colombia and the work of the United Nations Verification Mission.

#### **Haiti**

On 15 October, the Security Council held a debate on the situation in Haiti in which it discussed the transition of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti to a special political mission, starting from 16 October 2019. The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Haiti, and the new Head of the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, Helen La Lime. The briefing was held in the context of the report of the Secretary-General of 9 October 2019 ([S/2019/805](#)). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General briefed the Council on the recent political, economic and security developments in the country. The meeting was also briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, who described multifaceted crises affecting the country. Members of the Council stressed the necessity for Haiti's stakeholders of engaging in an inclusive national dialogue in order to overcome the political impasse and further emphasized the urgent need to address deteriorating humanitarian conditions in Haiti through coordinated action by the Government of Haiti and the international community.

## **Thematic files**

### **Women and peace and security**

On 29 October, the Security Council held its annual debate on women and peace and security in which it considered the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#), and subsequent resolutions on women and peace and security, in particular resolution [2122 \(2013\)](#), in which it called for updates on progress, challenges and gaps across all areas of the women and peace and security agenda. The meeting commenced with the unanimous adoption of resolution [2493 \(2019\)](#), presented by South Africa. In the resolution, the Council calls on Member States to fully implement all Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security and urges them to ensure and promote the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of peace processes. The Council received briefings from the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, the Special Envoy of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on Women, Peace and Security, Bineta Diop, and representatives of civil society. Also speaking were several cabinet ministers, from Germany (on behalf of the Group of Friends of the African Women's Leaders Network), Norway (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Sweden, Guatemala, Liberia, the Republic of Korea and South Africa. All members of the Security Council, as well as a large number of Member States, made statements expressing support for the women and peace and security agenda. Owing to the large list of speakers, the meeting had to be concluded at a meeting held on 4 November, under the presidency of the United Kingdom.

### **Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security**

On 30 October, the Security Council met to discuss cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union on matters of peace and security, considering the report of the Secretary-General on strengthening the partnership between the United Nations and the African Union on issues of peace and security in Africa, including on the work of the United Nations Office to the African Union ([S/2019/759](#)). The meeting was briefed via video link by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the African Union and Head of the United Nations Office to the African Union, Hanna Tetteh. In her briefing, the Special Representative described a range of cooperative mechanisms between the two organizations, provided for under the 2018 Joint United Nations-African Union Framework for an Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security. These include joint field visits, between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, and collaborative efforts on a range of peace and security matters in Africa. She mentioned that certain challenges remain, such as funding for African Union peace operations, which require attention. The meeting was also briefed by the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Fatima Mohammed, who highlighted positive, collaborative initiatives between the two organizations, which were contributing to positive gains on peace and security matters on the continent. In their remarks, members of the Security Council were complimentary as to the positive cooperative and collaborative relationship and initiatives between the Security Council and the African Union Peace and Security Council, calling for a deepening of this relationship under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter.

**Private meeting: International Court of Justice briefing**

On 31 October, the Security Council held a private meeting on the annual briefing by the President of the International Court of Justice. The meeting saw an exchange of views between members of the Security Council and the President of the International Court of Justice, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, on the topic of the concept of “threat to international peace and security” and its evolution through the practice of the Security Council and the Court.

**Maintenance of international peace and security**

On 3 October, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2491 \(2019\)](#), to extend for a year the existing authorization for United Nations member nations to search vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya if there are reasonable suspicions that they are being used to smuggle migrants or for human trafficking.

**Non-Proliferation**

On 8 October, the Security Council held consultations on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea which were raised under any other business, following the consultations on Mali. The consultations involved a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mohamed Khiari, and focused on the launch by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea of a submarine-based missile, which was in violation of relevant Security Council resolutions. In general, Security Council members stressed the need for unity in condemning this violation of Security Council resolutions and urged greater urgency in the resumed talks between the United States and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea.

**Informal wrap-up**

On 31 October, the President of the Security Council held a wrap-up meeting with Member States of the United Nations.

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