



Security Council

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Letter dated 1 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

As New York City has entered a less restrictive stage of reopening, the Security Council should not be lagging far behind. As Russia assumes the presidency of the Security Council on 1 October, we are keen to ensure that the Council resumes its functioning as much back to normal as feasible. While recognizing fully the need to be prudent and exercise all necessary precautions, we believe that it is time for the Security Council to return to in-person meetings in the Security Council Chamber. We therefore plan by default to conduct meetings in traditional format foreseen by the Charter of the United Nations and the provisional rules of procedure of the Council.

The protocol on the Security Council members' presence in the Chamber elaborated by us additionally and agreed upon by all Council members and in consultation with the Secretariat is attached hereto (see annex).

Should the health situation in New York City require a return to discussions via videoconference as was mostly the case in March–September 2020, the Council would be guided by the working methods of previous presidencies as set out in the letter dated 7 May 2020 from the President of the Council ([S/2020/372](#)).

We have requested the Secretary-General as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization under Article 97 of the Charter to give necessary instructions to the Security Council Affairs Division and all relevant United Nations services.

The situation will be further assessed at the end of October or earlier if the need arises, and may be reviewed, adjusted or discontinued if the Council so decides.

(Signed) Vassily **Nebenzia**
President of the Security Council



Annex

Modalities of in-person meetings of the Security Council for October 2020

In the light of recent positive developments regarding the containment of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak in the City of New York, the Security Council intends to return to in-person meetings in the Security Council Chamber while continuing to ensure the safety of the delegations and of United Nations personnel by taking reasonable precautions. In the event that conditions worsen, the Security Council may revert to holding videoconferences.

Location and access

Security Council meetings, including briefings and informal consultations, will be conducted in the Security Council Chamber while complying with appropriate physical distancing measures. Access to the Security Council Chamber is limited to no more than two persons per delegation and a required number of United Nations and Security Council Secretariat staff (approximately 38). The primary participants will take the place of their country at the table of the Security Council; the additional participants will have a place assigned by the Secretariat, taking into account physical distancing requirements. While the Council proceeds with holding meetings at the Chamber, the Secretariat is encouraged to explore the option of installing Plexiglas barriers between the seats and around the table where physical distancing is not possible to reduce the risk of exposure. During open briefings, owing to seating restrictions, the physical presence at the standard table of up to two briefers or Member States invited under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure is possible. Placing an additional table in front of the Security Council table to increase this number is a viable option.

For purposes of contact tracing and COVID-19 prevention, conference officers will register each participant who enters the Security Council Chamber. Means of sanitation will be provided in the Chamber at all times.

Entrance to and exit from the Security Council Chamber will be adapted to allow no-touch entry. The entrance to the Security Council Chamber will be organized through the door adjacent to the quiet room. The door of the Security Council Chamber facing the Trusteeship Council Chamber will serve as the exit. Doors will open at 9.30 a.m. or 2.30 p.m. on days where a physical meeting is scheduled. Delegations are kindly asked to be in the room at least 10 minutes in advance so that the meeting or consultations can start at 10 a.m. or 3 p.m. sharp.

Public meetings will be broadcast live on UN Web TV. Non-members of the Security Council may observe the briefings live by means of UN Web TV.

Incoming members are entitled to two observers' places in the Chamber assigned by the Secretariat during both meetings and informal consultations, without setting a precedent for the times when the consultations of the Council are conducted at the consultations room.

Health and security

In the interest of the health, safety and well-being of all delegates and staff, anyone not feeling well should not come to Headquarters. Participants are kindly requested to limit the time they are physically present at Headquarters to the strict minimum necessary for conducting official business. Physical distancing must be maintained at all times.

Within the Security Council Chamber, participants will be asked to circulate clockwise only and to respect the required physical distance. All persons physically present inside the Security Council Chamber are required to wear a face covering mask. Members of the Council and other participants at the Council meetings are strongly encouraged to wear a mask when delivering their remarks or speaking into the microphone, for the safety and security of other participants. Masks must also be worn at all times in common areas of the UN Headquarters.

There will be no distribution of documents in the Security Council Chamber. Likewise, all delegations should refrain from the distribution of any material or documents in the Security Council Chamber, at the tables and boards outside the Chamber or elsewhere at Headquarters. No pens or pencils will be provided. The delegates are also encouraged to bring their own water in reusable containers.
