



Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

8942nd meeting

Wednesday, 22 December 2021, 2 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Abarry	(Niger)
<i>Members:</i>	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia	Ms. Lõuk
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	India	Mr. Ravindran
	Ireland	Mr. McSwiney
	Kenya	Ms. Nyakoe
	Mexico	Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez
	Norway	Ms. Syed
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Ms. Mark
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Lagha
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Eckersley
	United States of America	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam	Mr. Pham

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).

21-41322 (E)



Accessible document

Please recycle



The meeting was called to order at 2.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nigeria, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Saint Kitts and Nevis, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Uruguay and Vanuatu to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2021/1075, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Morocco, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Palau, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America, Uruguay and Vanuatu.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Estonia, France, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

Against:

None

Abstaining:

China, India, Russian Federation

The President (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, none against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2616 (2021).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

Mr. De la Fuente Ramírez (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I begin by referring to the serious problem posed by illicit flows of arms at the international level. Current conflicts in the world have a common denominator — the trafficking and diversion of arms that fuel and sustain actors that prefer to resort to force instead of dialogue and negotiations. Mexico has insisted on the need to accord greater attention to the issue and for more effective and preventive action on the part of the Security Council.

Today the Security Council has adopted resolution 2616 (2021), which responds to a real and critical problem. In line with the recommendations of the Secretary-General and the relevant Panels of Experts, the resolution also includes elements that had been put forward by my delegation and others that have participated in previous related debates. It contains significant provisions on the need to build capacity and provide assistance to Member States that require it. It also promotes greater collaboration among States. It supports and reinforces frameworks that are shared by all, such as the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and other initiatives, strategies and actions plans at the regional level.

We are grateful for the joint efforts of members of the Council to produce a resolution that is viable and has tangible impact. Throughout the process, we opted — in our best diplomatic tradition — to reach a compromise that would enable us to achieve common

denominators. Mexico is of the view that the resolution constitutes a strong step in the right direction and that it will strengthen prior decisions and initiatives, such as resolution 2220 (2015).

However, progress must continue, with further proposals when conditions so require. The objective here is to halt the diversion of arms, which fuels conflicts, and to in turn strengthen the international legal order, political dialogue and negotiations between parties.

I wish to conclude with words of gratitude, on behalf of my country, to all that sponsored the resolution. It has been most enlightening to observe the geopolitical diversity of States that have signed onto this initiative. The resolute commitment of all will be decisive in our efforts to combat illicit trafficking in arms and to support the decisions of the United Nations and the Security Council.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation abstained in the voting on resolution 2616 (2021), on combating illicit arms trafficking.

To put it bluntly, for the entire time the resolution was being discussed, we did not really understand why it was introduced in the first place. The penholders' concept changed several times. However, in our view, it was the starting point that was incorrect: an attempt to introduce a one-size-fits-all, universal approach to all arms embargo regimes and peacekeeping missions. That runs counter to the very nature of such regimes and missions, which are approved by separate decisions of the Council when considering country-specific situations with their own particularities.

As a result, the meaning of the document presented today is simply drowned in a huge number of provisos, the essence of which boils down to the fact that all the proposed measures should be implemented in the context of the Security Council's consideration of country-specific situations. It is not clear to us where the added value of the resolution lies. As the results of the vote have shown, there was no consensus on the document in the Council either.

Unfortunately, this situation vividly illustrates the negative trend that has emerged recently, namely, the adoption of resolutions for resolutions' sake on fashionable or hastily invented topics, according to the principle that, if there is a presidency, there must be a resolution. As a result, the quality and significance

of Security Council products become secondary. This situation undermines the credibility of the Council and prevents it from fully carrying out its mandate as the organ responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security. Russia intends to continue defending that precise approach when evaluating the Council's output.

Mr. Ravindran (India): I take the floor to submit India's explanation of vote.

The threat posed by the illicit transfer and illegal diversion of arms to international peace and security is a matter of serious concern to the entire international community. We thank the Mexican delegation for raising awareness about the issue through the open debate organized during its presidency on 22 November (see S/PV.8909).

During that debate, India strongly supported the need to address the threat of arms trafficking, the transfer of arms to terrorist groups and the linkages between arms trafficking and terrorism. We highlighted the threat posed by the illicit flow of arms to the safety and security of peacekeepers and called for the effective implementation of Council-mandated arms embargoes by the Member States.

Given that India is one of the largest troop-contributing countries to United Nations peacekeeping, we have some core concerns on the approach that today's resolution (resolution 2616 (2021)) prescribes. It is our considered view that United Nations peacekeeping operations should not be used as a means to implement arms embargoes. That will not only entail a big addition to their existing mandate, but it will also affect their operational efficiency and could possibly even put peacekeepers at risk.

I would like to submit our concerns on the following four counts.

First, asking peace operations to monitor and trace arms is a major addition to the existing mandate given to United Nations peacekeepers and will have wider implications for the very nature of peacekeeping operations. That requires extensive consultations with all troop- and police-contributing countries, which for some reason were not initiated. Moreover, the substantive aspect of the issue should ideally have been dealt with in the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Secondly, such an additional task for United Nations peacekeepers will have an adverse impact on their own

safety and security. Potential changes in the movement of peacekeepers to border and other areas and other conflict zones will spread them thin in conflict zones and expose them to a much higher risk of direct attacks from armed smugglers. United Nations peacekeepers need not be assigned mandates that lie primarily with border security forces and are best left in the hands of the host country's national security forces.

Thirdly, the implementation of arms embargoes entails a gamut of interrelated and complex issues that are best dealt with by specialized United Nations agencies with the necessary mandates, skill sets, expertise and resources.

Fourthly and finally, peacekeepers' core mandated assignment, such as the protection of civilians, will also be impacted adversely if they are given an additional assignment, over and above the principal mandate, without the necessary resources and capabilities.

As such, even though we have supported Mexico in its principled pursuit to tackle the menace of small arms, since our concerns remain largely unaddressed in the context of United Nations peacekeeping, we were constrained to abstain from voting.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The illicit flow, excessive accumulation and arbitrary abuse of small arms and light weapons have intensified armed conflicts, impeded sustainable development and given a boost to transnational organized crime and terrorist activities, thereby posing a serious challenge to international peace and security.

China supports the Security Council's attention to the embargoes on small arms and light weapons. Based on that position, we participated constructively in the negotiations on resolution 2616 (2021) and proposed amendments. Most regrettably, the final draft failed to fully reflect China's concerns. For that reason, China was forced to abstain in the voting just now.

Many elements in the resolution entail adjustments to the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations, requiring peacekeeping operations to provide support to the countries concerned in monitoring arms embargoes and tracking weapons smuggling, inter alia. It also requests that the Secretary-General make recommendations on the matter in his country-specific reports.

China supports peacekeeping operations in fulfilling their mandated tasks on the basis of respect

for the sovereignty of the countries concerned, while fully listening to their aspirations and providing support in the capacity-building, including assistance on tightening control over small arms and light weapons.

At the same time, it should be noted that each mission area has its own specificities and challenges and that peacekeeping operations mandates should be discussed on a case-by-case basis in light of the specific situation. It is inappropriate to make a one-size-fits-all arrangement for peacekeeping operations mandates through a Security Council resolution.

All countries are duly bound to strictly implement the arms embargo measures specified in the relevant Council resolutions. Meanwhile, no country is allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries or violate their sovereignty under the pretext of implementing Security Council resolutions. Sanctions are a means to an end, but not an end in themselves.

The original intent of Security Council arms embargoes is to help the countries concerned to restore national stability and law and order. They must not hinder them in strengthening their own security capabilities. It is highly regrettable that those reasonable views are not fully reflected in the resolution.

From a global perspective, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons exists in both developing and developed countries. The lax management of domestic guns and weapons in a certain developed country has not only harmed its own social stability and the safety of its people's lives but has also brought great harm to the neighbouring countries. The international community must bear that closely in mind.

Mr. Pham (Viet Nam): My delegation voted in favour of resolution 2616 (2021), as we are concerned about the negative impacts of the illicit trade in, and misuse of, small arms and light weapons on peace and stability in many places in the world. We support and share the attention to the relevant response efforts by regions and States, including in Africa, that are heavily affected by the issue of small arms and light weapons. It is important that all existing frameworks and commitments on small arms and light weapons, as well as related sanctions measures by the Security Council, be resolutely implemented.

We are of the view that strengthening management and monitoring measures in relation to illicit small arms and light weapons positively contributes to

peace, stability and reconstruction in conflict areas. My delegation also reaffirms the right of States to use small arms and light weapons for the exercise of their legitimate right to national defence. It is the wish of Viet Nam that international consensus, including within the Security Council, be strengthened on issues that have common impacts on the international community.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the Niger.

The Niger thanks Mexico for the initiative regarding the resolution that we just adopted on the important issue of the circulation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in situations of conflict (resolution 2616 (2021)).

The Niger co-sponsored and voted in favour of the resolution, since we think that the Security Council should seriously address the issue of the proliferation of such weapons, which risks undermining its own actions in maintaining international peace and security, including the efficacy of its sanctions regimes and the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations themselves. We are pleased that the text of the resolution takes that issue into account on a case-by-case basis in the mandate renewals of peacekeeping missions, as well as arms embargoes on countries in conflict, whether it be the Central African Republic, Libya or the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

My delegation also welcomes the provisions on capacity-building for States in conflict or post-conflict situations in the areas of the stockpile management, record keeping, tracing and marking of their military arsenals. However, we would have preferred that the Council go further in addressing the issue of SALW. We should ask ourselves why SALW are circulating despite all the monitoring measures set in place by arms embargoes. If weapons circulate and are accessible to terrorist armed groups, it is because they are made and sold, as well as being channelled in violation of

all relevant Security Council resolutions, thereby perpetuating the cycle of violence in a number of theatres of conflict. One day, the members of the Security Council should have the courage to address that issue, since it is ultimately civilian populations, particularly women and children, who remain the primary victims of the use of such weapons. It is high time that the economic interests of some arms manufacturers give way to the need to save human lives.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Before adjourning the meeting, as this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of December, marking the end of the Niger's presidency and term on the Council, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of the Niger to the Council members for their cooperation and friendship. I also thank the members of the Secretariat for their support and professionalism, which enabled us to navigate all the rules and procedures of the Council.

At the end of a busy month, we can congratulate ourselves on having been able to reach consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done that without the valuable support of every delegation, as well as that of the interpreters, whose flexibility I hail, the security staff and all those who contribute daily to the success of our work behind the scenes, such as the conference services and the verbatim reporters.

I wish every success to the new elected members, namely, Albania, Brazil, the United Arab Emirates, Gabon and Ghana.

As we end our presidency, I know that I speak on behalf of all the Council members in wishing the delegation of Norway and my dear friend Ms. Mona Juul good luck as they assume the presidency for the month of January.

The meeting rose at 2.25 p.m.