



# Security Council

Seventy-eighth year

*Provisional*

## 9347

th meeting

Wednesday, 14 June 2023, 12.40 p.m.

New York

*President:* Mrs. Nusseibeh . . . . . (United Arab Emirates)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Hoxha
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Zhang Jun
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Pérez Loose
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivi�re
Gabon . . . . .	Mr. Immongault
Ghana . . . . .	Ms. Oppong-Ntiri
Japan . . . . .	Mrs. Shino
Malta . . . . .	Mrs. Frazier
Mozambique . . . . .	Ms. Comoane
Russian Federation. . . . .	Mr. Nebenzia
Switzerland . . . . .	Mr. Hauri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America. . . . .	Mr. DeLaurentis

## Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

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*The meeting was called to order at 12.40 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **Maintenance of international peace and security**

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2023/427, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of the United Arab Emirates.

The United Arab Emirates is pleased to bring this draft resolution to the Council today together with the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The Charter of the United Nations enshrines our collective determination in maintaining international peace and Security; and to that end it underscores the need to practice tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

Today Security Council members will vote on a draft resolution that will reaffirm the commitment to upholding the universal principles of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. As the text makes clear, those principles, along with human rights and gender equality, are not competing interests; rather, they are mutually reinforcing. They should be promoted and implemented to achieve peace, security, stability and sustainable development.

The root causes of conflict, past and present, are multifaceted; yet we continue to see common threat multipliers that drive the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflict across the files on the Council's agenda. Hate speech, racism and extremism stoke tensions and fuel grievances, precipitating the descent into conflict at times. Print, broadcast and digital media are exploited to incite hatred by creating echo chambers and spreading misinformation and disinformation. In conflict situations, the same threat multipliers fuel dehumanizing ideologies that spoil peace processes and motivate gender persecution and the victimization of religious and belief minorities.

Those long-standing prejudices do not simply vanish once the fighting stops. When racist and extremist ideologies are left unaddressed, that hatred is passed down through generations, paving the way for the cycle of conflict to take hold. This draft resolution takes concrete steps to address hate speech, racism and extremism, which threaten peace and security. It encourages all key stakeholders to speak out against hate speech and to promote tolerance. The draft resolution recognizes the important role of women, youth and interreligious dialogue and urges States to engage and empower local communities, religious and ethnic minorities and civil society. It also provides systematic reporting to ensure that the Council will be well-briefed to respond to emerging threats.

Through those measures, the draft resolution aims to advance a holistic approach to promoting peace and building resilience to conflict. We hope for the full support of the Council to send a unified message today that the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence are the foundation upon which lasting peace must be built. And it is the collective responsibility of the international community to uphold them. The solemn responsibility of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security requires us to proactively respond to new challenges and threats as they emerge. This draft resolution takes that step today. I would like to express our deep appreciation for the constructive approach and valuable engagement by Council members throughout the negotiation process, which made the text stronger, and to this first step taken today for a whole-of-system approach by the Security Council to addressing the issues highlighted in the draft resolution.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

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

**Mr. De Rivi re (France)** (*spoke in French*): On closer reflection, France has decided to vote in favour of draft resolution S/2023/427, which is being put before us today. However, I would like to provide some clarifications.

Brotherhood and tolerance are important values; but they are also ambiguous concepts subject to at times contradictory interpretations. That is why France hopes that the Security Council, in the context of its mandate, will focus on respect for the Charter of the United Nations, international law and all conventions on ensuring human rights.

The General Assembly and the Human Rights Council — very clearly — must be the venues where fraternity and tolerance are discussed. In that regard, France welcomes the fact that the draft resolution before us adheres to that reasoning. Similarly, however important they may be, religious issues have no place in the Security Council. They should not be addressed unless the freedom of expression is fully observed.

France regrets that the draft resolution is selective and too weak on many issues: the freedom of expression in all its forms, defending human rights, the rights of women, issues of sexual orientation and gender identity, and a potentially too-broad conception of extremism.

France will continue to be active on these issues in all the relevant forums. France will oppose any efforts to bring into the Security Council issues that do not belong here. And it will seek to ensure that the Council can concretely and practically advance the resolution of conflicts and the promotion of peace.

**The President:** I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President:** The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2686 (2023).

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

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): I thank all delegations that engaged constructively in the development of this important resolution (resolution 2686 (2023)). The United Kingdom was pleased to partner with the United Arab Emirates to deliver this landmark resolution in the Security Council.

The resolution the Council just adopted today does three things.

First, it directly addresses for the first time the discrimination and persecution faced by a range of minority groups in conflict settings. As we just

discussed (see S/PV.9346), that includes religious minorities — such as the Yazidis in Iraq, the Rohingya in Myanmar and the Baha'i's in Houthi-controlled Yemen.

Secondly, it addresses the growing problem of incitement in conflicts, including misinformation and disinformation. The Secretary-General was very clear today that this is a growing problem. This resolution encourages the United Nations to better scan the horizon and monitor those risks, and it asks the Secretary-General to alert the Council when it thinks the Council must act.

And thirdly, it encourages the United Nations system to bolster its engagement with grassroots communities and organizers to prevent, mediate and resolve conflict. Women, youth and leaders from a wide range of communities must be at the heart of addressing these challenges.

Critically, this resolution is underpinned by human rights and fundamental freedoms, specifically the right to the freedom of expression. The careful drafting makes clear that all efforts to address acts of incitement and extremism in conflict must do so in a way that complies with international human rights law, and it reaffirms that all States must respect and protect the rights and freedoms of all individuals. That is — and must remain — the bedrock of all our efforts to tackle these important challenges.

**Mr. Hauri** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): Switzerland thanks the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom for their efforts to achieve a text acceptable to all.

Switzerland recognizes that hate speech, discrimination, intolerance and violent extremism are relevant aspects in the context of conflicts and their prevention. In a spirit of compromise and consensus, we therefore voted in favour of resolution 2686 (2023). Nevertheless, we would like to make the following points to clarify our position.

Switzerland condemns all forms of discrimination, intolerance and incitement to hatred or violence. At the same time, Switzerland attaches the utmost importance to respect for international human rights law, including the freedom of expression, both online and offline. The freedom of expression — a priority of Switzerland's foreign policy on human rights — is the cornerstone of any pluralistic and inclusive society. We firmly defend the position that States must guarantee that all voices,

even the most critical ones, can be expressed in their societies. However, the freedom of expression in no way authorizes discriminatory or racist comments that undermine human dignity.

The text's approach to "extremism" was the subject of intense discussion and was of particular importance to Switzerland. We reiterate our concern that the term "extremism" without the word "violent" leaves room for a broad interpretation that could be used arbitrarily against individuals and groups exercising their freedom of expression and opinion. That is why Switzerland has ensured that the term is sufficiently contextualized and that human rights are anchored in the text. We would also like to stress that the word "extremism" should be used to describe actions and not ideas. In that regard, we regret that the resolution does not include references to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Furthermore, throughout the negotiations, Switzerland worked to ensure that all references to women's rights, gender equality and the women and peace and security agenda reflected the highest and most recent standards established by Security Council resolutions. We deplore the fact that certain proposals were not retained and call for the progress made in recent years on the international legal framework and the agreed language on women's rights and gender equality not to be called into question.

Finally, we reiterate the importance of tackling discrimination in all its forms. We call on all States to respect the obligation on non-discrimination and to strengthen their commitment to creating a society in which all are free and equal before the law and in which no one is left behind, including those affected by intersecting or multiple forms of discrimination.

In our view, it is clear that it is in that spirit of compliance with international law, in particular international human rights law, that this resolution will be interpreted and implemented.

**Mr. DeLaurentis** (United States of America): Standing for the freedoms of expression and religion or belief, it is United States policy to support the protection of human rights as a central tenet of international peace and security, and we view efforts to that end as foundational to the mission of the United Nations and to our work together here in the Security Council. Human fraternity, in the words of President Biden, can build

"a better world that upholds universal human rights, lifts every human being and advances peace and security for all".

We appreciate that this meeting today and the vote on resolution 2686 (2023) is occurring in a broader global context in which fundamental rights and freedoms are under assault as never before, including by Governments seeking to infringe upon those rights under the cover of "combating extremism." It is an utmost United States priority with this resolution that the Council does not appear to be granting license to States to repress dissenting views under the pretext of "countering extremism" or maintaining peace or societal harmony.

For years, the United Nations has appropriately focused on addressing violent extremism, including in the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and existing commitments Member States have made to prevent and counter violent extremism. In the context of such efforts, the Security Council has also been clear that opinions and beliefs must be protected, even if characterized as "extreme", and States should seek to address violent acts of extremism that threaten peace and security. The United States does not view this resolution as altering that emphasis. Rather, the text of the resolution, in repeatedly discussing "extremism" in the context of armed conflict and violence, continues to distinguish between "extremism" and "violent extremism."

It was important to us that this resolution reaffirm the vital role of women's leadership in the prevention and resolution of conflict and their contribution to prevent the spread of intolerance and incitement to hatred. We also ensured that this resolution emphasized that combating extremism must be done in a manner consistent with applicable international law. States must respect and vigorously protect international law and human rights, including the freedoms of expression and religion, even as they promote tolerance and address ideologies that are indeed abhorrent.

Stifling human rights is counterproductive to the vision of peace and security that we, as members of the Security Council, seek to advance. To unduly limit the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms under a pretext of combating extremism undermines those universal rights and freedoms.

The United States stands with like-minded members of the Council in committing to ensure this resolution will not be misused to justify the repression of human rights defenders, women and girls and LGBTQI+ persons, or any violations or abuses of human rights. And we welcome the attention of civil society to ensure, as the Council has upheld previously, that “extremism,” when not linked to violence, must never be accepted as a justification to curtail human rights or fundamental freedoms. Indeed, nothing in this resolution is intended to construe peaceful opposition to Government policy, advocacy for addressing climate change or the exposure of corruption as “extremism.”

As always, the United States expects the Security Council will work assiduously to ensure that acts threatening peace and security are addressed in a manner that upholds human rights and fundamental freedoms. Only through respecting fundamental human rights can we truly promote tolerance — the shared objective of this resolution.

**Mrs. Frazier** (Malta): Over the past few weeks, together with other members of the Security Council, we engaged with the co-penholders in a constructive dialogue and in the spirit of openness and compromise. We are pleased that those discussions led to a text that could be adopted by consensus today, and we thank the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom for their tireless efforts to that end.

On this day, it is also important for us to highlight that the United Nations human rights network and peacebuilding architecture is universally accepted for responding to violence caused by incitement and hate speech, whether based on religion or belief, sexual orientation or gender identity, ethnicity, race or other forms of identity. The right to the freedom of expression is of fundamental importance, and it is our collective duty to counter any attempts that seek to limit the exercise of that right. Malta firmly believes that

intersectional and gender transformative approaches are the most effective in responding to multiple, and often overlapping, forms of discrimination and incitement to hatred.

Furthermore, Malta is committed to ensuring that neither women nor the women and peace and security agenda are instrumentalized in counter-terrorism and national security approaches. In that vein, Malta interprets the term “extremism” to refer to violent extremism conducive to terrorism — which is important not to encroach upon human rights. To that end, we underscore the responsibility of all Member States to promote, protect and uphold the full spectrum of human rights in all contexts. We strongly reject any actions in the name of preventing or countering terrorism, violent extremism or extremism more broadly that violate international human rights law, including the rights to the freedom of religion or belief, expression, association, assembly, privacy, freedom of movement and the prohibition on discrimination.

**Mr. Pérez Loose** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Ecuador appreciates the work done by the delegations of the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom during the negotiations on resolution 2686 (2023).

My delegation voted in favour because we believe that intolerance in all its forms and manifestations undermines international peace and security. Ecuador underscores its principled position on, and boundless commitment to, the promotion of, and respect for, human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all human beings, including the freedoms of thought, expression and the press.

My delegation highlights that nothing in the resolution should be read, interpreted or, much less, invoked in order to limit, constrain or place conditions on the free exercise of individual freedoms.

*The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.*