

Africa and the Sahel, while reaffirming its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of all States in the region and

emphasizing the need to respect fully the principle of non-interference.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴ Ibid., tenth paragraph.

Table 1
Meetings: peace consolidation in West Africa

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8814 8 July 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) (S/2021/612)			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNOWAS, President of the Réseau ivoirien pour la défense des droits de l'enfant et de la femme	12 Council members, ^a all invitees	
S/PV.8836 17 August 2021						S/PRST/2021/16

^a China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

Table 2
Videoconferences: peace consolidation in West Africa

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
11 January 2021	S/2021/43	Letter dated 13 January 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
3 February 2021	No record (see A/76/2 , part II, chap. 31)		S/PRST/2021/3

9. Peace and security in Africa

During the period under review, the Council held seven meetings in connection with the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa” and adopted two presidential statements. Six of the meetings took the form of briefings, while one was held for the adoption of a decision.³⁰⁵ More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is

provided in table 1 below. Council members also held two open videoconferences in connection with the item. More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and open videoconferences, Council members held

³⁰⁵ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II.

informal consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences in connection with the item.³⁰⁶

In 2021, Council members held one open videoconference and a meeting focusing on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. Council members also held a high-level open videoconference to discuss the topic of addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa, which resulted in the adoption of a presidential statement. In addition, the Council held four public meetings relating to the Tigray region in Ethiopia and two other meetings on the situation regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, in connection with which a presidential statement was adopted. More details are provided below.

In relation to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, Council members heard briefings in May and November³⁰⁷ in connection with the reports of the Secretary-General.³⁰⁸ On 18 May, Council members held an open videoconference³⁰⁹ at which they heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the Commander of the Joint Force and the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission. In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General took stock of the support that the international community, and more particularly the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), had provided over the previous months to the Joint Force as it continued to scale up its operational tempo in a more and more challenging security environment. In that regard, he said that since the Pau Summit in January 2020, the improved coordination among national armies, Operation Barkhane, the Joint Force and MINUSMA, as well as the deployment of Task Force Takuba, had enabled results to be achieved in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region. He also said that there was a need to be aware of the dire consequences of the security situation for the population, as well as the risks for the rest of West Africa, if the situation in the Sahel was not properly addressed. He underlined that the Joint Force remained a vital part of the security responses to address extremist armed groups in the region and reiterated the need for more predictable funding for the Force.

³⁰⁶ See [A/76/2](#), part II, chap. 35. In 2021, some informal consultations of the Council were held in the form of closed videoconferences. For more details on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II, sect. I, and *Repertoire, Supplement 2020*, part II, sect. I.

³⁰⁷ See [S/2021/484](#) and [S/PV.8903](#).

³⁰⁸ See [S/2021/442](#) and [S/2021/940](#).

³⁰⁹ See [S/2021/484](#).

In his briefing, the Commander of the Joint Force spoke about the genesis and organization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, its work and recent progress, and the road ahead and outstanding challenges. Specifically on its logistical and financial support model, he described the complex support system by the countries integrating the Joint Force, the United Nations, the European Union and Operation Barkhane, adding that its sustainability remained fragile. He suggested that the most sustainable solution for a sustainable system of funding would be to establish a United Nations support office, funded by assessed and voluntary contributions, to provide the Joint Force with logistical, operational, tactical and strategic support. He reminded the Council of the need to redouble efforts to mobilize material and financial resources, in accordance with the commitments made by the international community, towards the eventual establishment of more permanent support.

Acknowledging the complexity of the situation in the Sahel, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission underlined in his statement that more needed to be done to address the root causes of conflicts in the Sahel through a long-term, comprehensive and integrated approach to sustaining peace and development. He described the meeting of the Peacebuilding Commission on 28 April to discuss peace and development trends in the Sahel and elaborated on the Commission's work in the region. He reported that at its meeting held on 28 April the Commission had recognized the budgetary burden caused by increased security expenditures and reduced revenue collection in several countries at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic was constraining resources and had called for greater coordination among the security, development and humanitarian actors in the region to ensure that efforts to meet programming and resource mobilization needs were effective. The Commission had also recognized that the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel remained a useful framework for ensuring proactive and effective United Nations activities in the Sahel to help to tackle the root causes and drivers of instability and violence in the region and had welcomed the continued support from the Peacebuilding Fund for cross-border investments and empowering women and youth.

During the discussion, Council members³¹⁰ commended the role of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in coordinating and mobilizing operational and strategic support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the

³¹⁰ Estonia, India, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia) and Viet Nam.

Sahel. The representative of Estonia asserted that regional and national ownership of counter-terrorism efforts was crucial to their success. Several Council members³¹¹ were supportive of the consideration and establishment of a United Nations support office dedicated to providing logistical and operational support for the Joint Force. According to the representative of Chad, the support office would enable the Joint Force to resolve definitively the issue of sustainable, predictable funding so that it could focus its full attention on the fight against terrorism in order to restore security, stability and peace and create the conditions for much-needed sustainable socioeconomic development in the region. The representative of the United States stated that the Group of Five for the Sahel trust fund and bilateral support to the Joint Force represented the right approach to addressing the Sahel's security concerns, and in order to make that work all partners must honour their pledges to the Joint Force and support the individual militaries of the States members of the Group of Five that supplied troops to the regional force.

On 12 November, the Council held a meeting³¹² at which it heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and by the President of the Burkina Faso chapter of the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the Economic Community of West African States Space. In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General reported that the situation in the region had remained extremely volatile and that the armed and security forces of the member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel were meeting the threat with determination and courage. The important decision of the States members of the Group of Five to take in hand their security challenges by creating the counter-terrorist Joint Force was a significant accomplishment, but, as noted by the Secretary-General in the assessment of support for the Joint Force,³¹³ it continued to face significant challenges. With reference to the assessment report as well as the latest report of the Secretary-General,³¹⁴ the Under-Secretary-General recalled that the Joint Force remained a vital part of a collective security response to the multiple challenges that the region faced.³¹⁵ Noting that the support model of the Joint Force was unpredictable and could not meet all of its needs, he expressed the conviction that only a dedicated support

office, funded through assessed contributions, could provide the support that the Force needed and that would enable it to become more effective and enhance the scope and reach of its work. While acknowledging that many donors and partners provided bilateral support to the member States of the Group of Five, in the light of the serious crisis unfolding in the region, a comprehensive and collective approach was needed to support a collective security initiative.

Speaking on behalf of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the representative of Chad elaborated on the worrisome security situation affecting the region, including terrorism, and the return of mercenaries and foreign fighters that were expelled from Libya, and affirmed that the Group of Five was a unique, relevant and beneficial initiative emanating from the States concerned. She said that it remained the only framework for action capable of providing the most appropriate solutions to the challenges that the subregion faced and added that with adequate resources commensurate with those serious challenges, the Group of Five had the capacity to eradicate the terrorist threat and bring about security and well-being for its people, to the benefit of the entire region and the world. With regard to the Joint Force, she reiterated the call to the Council to create a support office to provide it with sustainable, predictable and reliable funding.

The President of the Burkina Faso chapter of the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the Economic Community of West African States Space noted that the security crisis that prevailed in the region had exacerbated the significant gender inequality that already existed, underpinned by several sociocultural beliefs and barriers that were deeply rooted in tradition. She reported on the situation of women in the region, as well as on the initiatives by women to come together across platforms and networks at the regional level. To address the situation of women, she brought some recommendations to the attention of the Council. First, substantial technical and financial support for the development, dissemination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of national strategies and action plans for the implementation of the resolutions for women and young people must be provided. Secondly, substantial technical, material and financial support was needed for women's and young people's civil society organizations to implement long-term, positive impact projects and ensure effective and sustainable socioeconomic and political empowerment for women and girls. Thirdly, efforts must be undertaken to initiate, encourage, motivate and facilitate dialogue between armed movements and State and regional

³¹¹ India, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Russian Federation and Viet Nam.

³¹² See [S/PV.8903](#).

³¹³ [S/2021/850](#), annex.

³¹⁴ [S/2021/940](#).

³¹⁵ See [S/PV.8903](#).

authorities in order to silence the weapons in the Sahel region. Fourthly, substantial technical, material and financial support must be provided to ensure quality education and health for all in the Sahel States. Finally, substantial technical and financial support was needed for conflict prevention actions in the Group of Five region.

During the discussion, several Council members³¹⁶ supported the proposals of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations support office for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. By contrast, the representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States objected to the United Nations becoming a vehicle to provide support to the regional force, expressing concern at its involvement in offensive counter-terrorism operations. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed her country's readiness to hold a substantive discussion on the proposals contained in the October letter of the Secretary-General³¹⁷ regarding increased assistance to the Joint Force through the United Nations. She added that both options, either the creation of a small advisory office at the secretariat of the Joint Force or the creation of a full-fledged support office, required a clear understanding of their timing and feasibility, effectiveness, the costs involved and the sources of funding.³¹⁸ Council members³¹⁹ also addressed the Council's recent mission to the Niger and Mali.

On 19 May, at the initiative of China, which held the presidency for the month,³²⁰ Council members held a high-level open videoconference focused on addressing the root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa. At the videoconference,³²¹ Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. In his briefing, the Secretary-General said that one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that the crisis was feeding many of the drivers of conflict and instability and underlined that its severe impact on young people, especially in Africa, was contributing to increased risks that could be exploited by criminals and

extremists. He noted that the pandemic had also continued to deepen existing gender inequalities and threatened the hard-won gains in terms of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all areas of social, economic and political life. Nonetheless, recovery from the pandemic also offered an opportunity to address the root causes of conflict and implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. He noted that equitable and sustainable vaccine roll-out worldwide was the quickest path towards a fast and fair recovery and that the United Nations was advocating everywhere for a coordinated global effort on vaccines and for measures to alleviate the debt burden that threatened to cripple the recovery in many low- and middle-income developing countries, particularly in Africa.

In his remarks, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission said that slowed economic growth, lower levels of international trade, lower demand for Africa's primary exports, rising external debt and rising inflation had created an economic situation that would have a negative impact on the socioeconomic situation in many African countries and that 20 African countries faced the risk of collapse because of the burden of debt. He emphasized the urgent need to put an end to vaccine protectionism and vaccine nationalism, which threatened to exclude low-income and fragile countries thereby endangering the socioeconomic recovery of affected African countries. The Chairperson also emphasized the need not to lose the momentum gained before the COVID-19 pandemic on the nexus between peace, security and development as expressed in Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda, which had clearly articulated long-term goals. He encouraged the Council to consider a new approach and innovative ways to fund peace in Africa, as other organs and institutions in international fields were focusing on funding African development.

In his statement, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme noted that peace, security and development were intricately linked in Africa and that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union would require overcoming complex legacy issues and the challenges that compounded them, among them political instability, weak governance institutions, burgeoning inequalities, a rollback on human rights, the climate emergency and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. Building forward better would require local and global actors across the closely integrated disciplines of humanitarian response, development and peace to work together to address the

³¹⁶ France, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Norway and Estonia.

³¹⁷ See [S/2021/850](#).

³¹⁸ See [S/PV.8903](#).

³¹⁹ France, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), India, Norway, United Kingdom, Ireland, China, United States and Mexico.

³²⁰ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 2 May 2021 from the representative of China to the Secretary-General ([S/2021/420](#)).

³²¹ See [S/2021/490](#).

root causes of conflict. In that regard, he focused on three critical issues: first, the next steps regarding vaccine equity, fiscal space and the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; second, the opportunities around the green economy for countries and regions most affected by conflict to build forward better for people and the planet; and third, the initiatives to support State capacity, heal communities and create an inclusive future, especially for women and girls.

Following the briefings, some speakers³²² recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals, while others³²³ focused on the increase in the number of people that lived in poverty and others³²⁴ on worsened inequality. To support Africa's development and recovery from the pandemic, several speakers³²⁵ underscored the need for debt relief, some³²⁶ underscored the need to implement the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 and others³²⁷ expressed support for the African Continental Free Trade Area. Most speakers also emphasized the need for equitable vaccine access and supported the role of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility. Several speakers³²⁸ emphasized the need to strengthen Africa's public health system to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and future health crises. In addition, some speakers³²⁹ recognized that the Peacebuilding Commission could play a role in supporting the recovery from the pandemic. In that regard, the representative of South Africa said that the United Nations, through its bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Security Council, should harmonize its engagement with the African Union and regional economic communities and

regional mechanisms on recovery and reconstruction efforts as determined by the concerned countries, which would also reduce any overlapping and duplication of effort on the ground. Recognizing that the pandemic had had a greater impact on women and girls, several speakers³³⁰ emphasized the need to place them at the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery. In addition, several speakers³³¹ noted that the pandemic had exacerbated the root causes of conflicts. In that regard, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of Tunisia noted the need for the Council's approach to international security to take into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic. The representative of Hungary affirmed that the pandemic had not only created new threats to global peace and security, but also unique opportunities to improve the prospects for future cooperation.

On 19 May, the Council adopted a presidential statement, which was announced at the end of the videoconference.³³² In the presidential statement, the Council expressed grave concern about the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had caused severe socioeconomic, political, humanitarian and security repercussions and had further exacerbated existing conflict drivers in Africa.³³³ The Council stressed the need for greater support for African countries, especially conflict-affected countries, and regional and subregional organizations to recover from the pandemic and build back better in a more just, equal, equitable and inclusive manner, including through providing the necessary medical supplies, including safe and efficacious tests, treatments and vaccines, and supporting African countries in strengthening their health systems.³³⁴ The Council also welcomed the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission and emphasized the need to integrate peacebuilding and sustaining peace into efforts to build back better in Africa.³³⁵

On 8 July, the Council held a meeting³³⁶ to discuss matters related to the construction of the Grand

³²² Canada (also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand), Ethiopia, Slovakia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

³²³ France, European Union, Pakistan, Portugal and Zimbabwe.

³²⁴ France, Ireland, Norway, Belgium, Canada (also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand), Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries), European Union, Japan, Pakistan, Portugal and Zimbabwe.

³²⁵ China, Tunisia, Estonia, Kenya, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, European Union, Pakistan, Rwanda and South Africa.

³²⁶ China, Viet Nam, Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Portugal, Qatar, Romania and Spain.

³²⁷ China, Ireland and Canada (also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand).

³²⁸ China, Viet Nam, Ireland, Kenya, Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries), European Union, Italy, Japan, Peru and Qatar.

³²⁹ Canada (also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand), Peru, Republic of Korea and South Africa.

³³⁰ Viet Nam, Ireland, Niger, Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries) and Peacebuilding Commission.

³³¹ Estonia, Kenya, Norway, Ethiopia, European Union, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe.

³³² See [S/PRST/2021/10](#). For more information on the procedures for the adoption of decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II, sect. I, and *Repertoire, Supplement 2020*, part II, sect. I.

³³³ [S/PRST/2021/10](#), second paragraph.

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, fourth paragraph.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, twenty-fifth paragraph.

³³⁶ See [S/PV.8816](#).

Ethiopian Renaissance Dam by Ethiopia. At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme. The representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan were invited to participate in the meeting under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.

In his remarks, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General stated that although Member States had acknowledged that most aspects related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam had been addressed, the parties still had to agree on some core issues, which included a dispute-resolution mechanism and drought mitigation, in particular the filling and operation of the dam in drought years. He also said that the League of Arab States had, on 15 June 2021, adopted a resolution on the dispute that called on Ethiopia to refrain from filling the reservoir without reaching an agreement and also called on the Council to hold consultations on the matter. Ethiopia had objected to the communiqué, which it saw as an attempt to politicize and internationalize the dispute, and instead stressed its commitment to the African Union mediation. The Special Envoy requested all parties to remain engaged and to avoid making any pronouncements that would increase tensions in a region that was already subject to a series of challenges.

In her statement, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme noted that the Governments of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan had over the years made sustained efforts to enhance their cooperation relating to their transboundary water resources, highlighting in that regard the 2015 declaration of principles in which they had committed to some core principles, including cooperation, equitable and reasonable utilization, preventing the cause of significant harm and peaceful settlement of disputes. She added that consensus had not been reached regarding some critical aspects, which included arrangements for the management of protracted drought, development upstream and downstream of the Dam and a dispute resolution mechanism, and that some differences also remained regarding the scope and nature of the proposed agreement. The Executive Director also underlined that effective and cooperative water management was even more important in the context of climate change. In that connection, climate models indicated that the flow of the Nile would exhibit increasing variability up to 2040, leading to more floods and more intense droughts.

Speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo informed the Council that there had been several positive developments, especially in the form of the draft agreement put together by the parties with the assistance of African Union experts. The proposals put forward indicated that 90 per cent of the technical problems had already been resolved. It remained for the parties to settle their outstanding technical and legal differences, including the nature of the agreement, the dispute resolution mechanism and waterflow management during periods of drought. In that regard, the Council, whose primary role in resolving international disputes was indisputable, should support the African Union and assist the facilitator in the quest for peace in that volatile area of the Horn of Africa.

Following the briefings, Council members encouraged the parties to avoid taking any action that could undermine negotiations and expressed support for the process led by the African Union.³³⁷ At the meeting,³³⁸ the representative of India said that transboundary water disputes should ideally be resolved through mechanisms agreed upon by the primary stakeholders and that the countries concerned should continue their bilateral engagements and cooperate fully in a focused manner with the African Union to reach a mutually acceptable, long-term solution to the relevant issues. The representatives of Mexico and France made reference to the actual and potential exacerbating effect of the dispute on the existing tensions in the region. In that regard, they emphasized the need to adopt a preventive approach and avoid the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam becoming a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. The representatives of the Niger and Mexico shared their experience of managing transboundary water resources. In that regard, the representative of the Niger said that the successful example of the management of the waters of the Niger River by any State under the authority of the Niger Basin Authority could effectively serve as a source of inspiration for an accelerated solution to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam issue. Similarly, the representative of Mexico offered the examples of the institutions that were devoted to implementing boundary and water treaties between Mexico and the United States and between Mexico, Belize and Guatemala as a model in future rounds of negotiations among Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan. The representative of the Russian Federation proposed that

³³⁷ For more information, see part V, sect. I.

³³⁸ See [S/PV.8816](#).

since all the interested parties were gathered in New York for the meeting, they could hold a round of negotiations, brokered by the presidency of the African Union, to resolve the differences over the Dam. He also confirmed his country's readiness to provide satellite monitoring of the filling of the reservoir in the event of a request from all participants in the trilateral negotiations. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt noted that despite the tireless efforts of the Chairpersons of the African Union and international partners, the parties were again confronted by the reality of the unilateral execution of the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam without an agreement to protect downstream communities against the dangers of the Dam. While expressing the hope of concluding a legally binding agreement that enabled Ethiopia to achieve its developmental objectives by generating hydropower expeditiously, efficiently and sustainably, he said that any agreement must be equitable, reasonable and legally binding and must include provisions to mitigate the adverse effects of the Dam. The Minister explained that Egypt had come to the Council in search of a viable path towards a peaceful, amicable and negotiated solution to the crisis and to avert the dire consequences of the parties' inability to reach a settlement on the matter. He expressed the expectation that the Council would take the necessary measures to ensure that the parties engaged in an effective process of negotiations that could yield an agreement that served the parties' collective interests. The Minister further called upon the Council to adopt the draft resolution on the question that had been circulated by Tunisia, which would reaffirm the Council's resolve to uphold its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and would send an unequivocal signal of reassurance that it remained committed to the peace and prosperity of the African continent. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan noted the benefits of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam for the Sudan in terms of flood prevention and regular flow throughout the year. Those benefits would materialize if the Dam were filled and operated in such a way that the Sudan was aware of how it was filled and operated. He indicated that his country could not accept that the filling and operating methods for the Dam, adopted unilaterally, could be used to terrorize communities of millions of Sudanese that relied mainly on river agriculture, undermine their dignity and violate their human rights. Cautioning against the Council's silence, the Minister expressed the hope that it would assume its responsibilities in maintaining regional peace and security in a preventative way by strengthening the negotiations under the auspices of the African Union

while allowing international mediators and observers to assume their role so as to facilitate the negotiations and reach an agreement in accordance with a set time frame and call on Ethiopia to abstain from any unilateral measure without prior agreement, which could pose a threat to millions of inhabitants behind the Dam. The Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy of Ethiopia expressed the belief that it was an unfitting use of the time and resources of the Council to discuss the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. He affirmed that for the first time since its establishment, the Council was being asked to pronounce itself on a water development project. Noting that the Council was a political and security organ, the Minister said that it was unhelpful and misguided to present to a global security body an issue that required a hydrotechnical solution and requested the Council to make the meeting the last of its deliberations on the subject, underscoring that there was no subject matter as far from the mandate of the Council as the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.

At a meeting held on 15 September,³³⁹ the Council adopted a presidential statement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.³⁴⁰ In the statement, the Council encouraged Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan to resume negotiations at the invitation of the Chairperson of the African Union to finalize expeditiously the text of a mutually acceptable and binding agreement on the filling and operation of the Dam, within a reasonable time frame.³⁴¹ The Council also underscored that the statement did not set out any principles or precedent for any other transboundary water dispute.³⁴²

Speaking after the adoption of the presidential statement, the representative of India explained that as an upper, middle and lower riparian State, with several rivers entering and exiting its land, any discussion on matters relating to such issues in the Council were of direct interest and importance to India.³⁴³ He stated in that regard that his country's principled position, as a general rule, was that transboundary water issues did not belong in the domain of the Council. In that regard, it was important to place on record that the presidential statement did not set out any principles or precedent for the Council to intervene or adjudicate in any other transboundary water dispute.

Concerning the situation in the northern region of Tigray in Ethiopia, the Council heard two briefings

³³⁹ See [S/PV.8860](#).

³⁴⁰ See [S/PRST/2021/18](#).

³⁴¹ *Ibid.*, fourth paragraph.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, last paragraph.

³⁴³ See [S/PV.8860](#).

each by the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and one each by the Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and the High Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa.³⁴⁴

At a meeting held on 2 July,³⁴⁵ the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, who said that after almost eight months of conflict, the Government of Ethiopia had on 28 June 2021 announced a unilateral ceasefire in Tigray, citing the need to address the humanitarian crisis in the region, but the Tigray Defence Forces had not yet agreed to it. She stated that a ceasefire observed by all parties would have facilitated the provision of humanitarian aid and would have been a starting point for the necessary political efforts to chart a way of the crisis. The Under-Secretary-General also noted that the conflict in Tigray was a result of deep-rooted political grievances that could only be resolved through dialogue and a credible political process and welcomed the promise by the Government of Ethiopia to take steps to hold an all-inclusive dialogue process, which could be part of a broader effort to address Ethiopia's structural challenges, encourage reconciliation and foster consensus on the way forward for the country's transition.

In his statement, the Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator stated that the humanitarian situation in Tigray was more alarming than when he had last briefed the Council on 15 June 2021,³⁴⁶ with two million people still displaced and close to 5.2 million people still requiring humanitarian assistance.³⁴⁷ He also said that more than 1,200 cases of serious sexual and gender-based violence had been reported and more continued to emerge and that 12 humanitarian workers had been killed since the start of the conflict. Despite the challenges, humanitarian actors continued to work to reach people in desperate need. The Acting Under-Secretary-General urged all

groups to stop fighting to allow humanitarian aid to get through unimpeded and to protect civilians.

In the statements after the briefings, several Council members³⁴⁸ called for the withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray and Ethiopia. The representative of Norway noted that their continued presence was a threat to regional peace and security.³⁴⁹ Some Council members recognized that the Council could help to end the conflict and achieve peace.³⁵⁰ The representative of China noted that when dealing with the issue, the Council needed to carefully and prudently calibrate the timing and approach taken to ensure that whatever action it took contributed to improving the situation in Tigray, rather than having the opposite effect. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed regret about the format of the meeting and cautioned against using it to further destabilize an already complex situation in Tigray and weaken the political position of the federal authorities, and further emphasized that the situation in Tigray must remain an internal affair of Ethiopia and that interference by the Council would be counterproductive. The representative of Estonia noted that it was clear that the conflict in Tigray constituted a threat to international peace and security, which was why it was vital that the issue remain a priority for the Council. The representative of Ethiopia questioned the rationale of calling the public meeting and implored the Council to act with full awareness of the external challenges that Ethiopia was facing.

At a subsequent meeting on the same issue, held on 26 August,³⁵¹ the Secretary-General noted that the military confrontation, which had started 10 months earlier in the northern region of Tigray, was spreading and the level of human suffering was growing, with serious political, economic and humanitarian implications for Ethiopia and the broader region. He said that all the parties must recognize that there was no military solution and expressed the belief that there was an opportunity to address the conflict peacefully, which the parties must seize in the interest of Ethiopia. The Secretary-General emphasized the need to create the conditions for the start of an inclusive national political dialogue to address the underlying causes of the conflict and to ensure that Ethiopian voices

³⁴⁴ See [S/PV.8812](#), [S/PV.8843](#), [S/PV.8875](#) and [S/PV.8899](#).

³⁴⁵ See [S/PV.8812](#). Prior to the meeting, on 22 April the Council issued a statement to the press on Ethiopia, in which it noted with concern the humanitarian situation in the Tigray region. For more information, see [S/2021/1084](#).

³⁴⁶ On 15 June, the Council held an informal interactive dialogue on the humanitarian situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia (see [S/2021/1032](#)). For more information on the Council's informal interactive dialogues, see part II.

³⁴⁷ See [S/PV.8812](#).

³⁴⁸ United States, United Kingdom, Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Mexico, Estonia, India, Norway and France.

³⁴⁹ For more information on the discussion of the Council regarding threats to international peace and security, see part VII, sect. I.

³⁵⁰ See [S/PV.8812](#) (United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Mexico and Viet Nam).

³⁵¹ See [S/PV.8843](#).

directed the pathway to peace. He said that the United Nations was ready to cooperate with the African Union and other key partners to support such a dialogue and emphasized that the attention and unity of the Council would be critical in the period ahead.

Following the Secretary-General's briefing, some Council members³⁵² stated that the conflict in Tigray posed long-term consequences for the unity and stability of Ethiopia. Several Council members³⁵³ noted that the conflict also threatened the stability, peace and security of the Horn of Africa and the wider region. Most Council members expressed support for the efforts of the Secretary-General to end the conflict and welcomed the appointment of the former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, as the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa. Echoing the Secretary-General, many Council members³⁵⁴ emphasized that there was no military solution to the conflict and that a political settlement was necessary. In that regard, the representatives of India, Kenya, also on behalf of the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia, and the Russian Federation emphasized that the dialogue should be led by Ethiopians. Most Council members³⁵⁵ argued in addition that African regional and subregional organizations had a crucial role to play in finding a political solution to end the crisis. The representative of the United States expressed deep concern about the role of Eritrea in fuelling the ongoing crisis, indicating that the presence of the Eritrean Defence Forces in Ethiopia remained a significant barrier to ceasefire negotiations and to a political resolution of the conflict. While noting that it was not possible to resolve the Tigray crisis through discussions in the Council, the representative of the Russian Federation said that it would be more effective if each Council member made its own contribution to resolving the situation, adding that the Russian Federation believed that emphasis needed to be placed on low-key diplomacy and bilateral channels of trust-based communication. The representative of United States stated instead that the trajectory of the conflict over the previous 10 months demanded continued Council action. Other Council members³⁵⁶ recalled the

importance of upholding the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States. Several Council members³⁵⁷ denounced the limitations imposed on the entrance of humanitarian aid to the Tigray region and called for unfettered humanitarian access. Council members³⁵⁸ also welcomed and expressed support for the joint investigation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission into alleged atrocities committed in Tigray. The representative of Ethiopia stated that the state of affairs in his country had not transpired overnight, explaining that the genesis of the conflict dated back at least three decades. He asked for help to realize peace, including by putting pressure on the Tigray People's Liberation Front to stop its criminal advances, abandon preparations for combat and abide by the laws of the country. He added that the Front also needed to irrefutably delink itself from internal and external sponsors and affiliates. The representative of Ethiopia asked that the international community remove the actual or perceived support emanating from its side, off which the Tigray People's Liberation Front fed.

On 6 October, the Council held a third meeting on the Tigray region.³⁵⁹ At the meeting, the Council heard another briefing by the Secretary-General, who stated that up to 7 million people in Tigray, Amhara and Afar were in need of food assistance and other emergency support. An estimated 400,000 people in Tigray were living in famine-like conditions. There was a need to focus all efforts on saving lives and avoiding a massive human tragedy, which made the announcement by the Government of Ethiopia that it was expelling eight senior United Nations officials, most of them humanitarian staff, particularly disturbing. He said that the expulsion should be a matter of deep concern for all, as it related to the core of relations between the United Nations and Member States. The United Nations would continue to play its mandated role and work with the Government of Ethiopia and with local and international partners to support millions of people that needed humanitarian assistance in Tigray, Amhara and Afar and across Ethiopia, in full accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and General Assembly resolution 46/182. The Secretary-General called on the Ethiopian authorities to allow the United Nations to do so without hindrance and to facilitate and enable its work

³⁵² Ireland, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

³⁵³ Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom, China, Mexico and India.

³⁵⁴ Ireland, Estonia, France, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam and Mexico.

³⁵⁵ Ireland, France, Norway, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam, China, Mexico and Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia).

³⁵⁶ Viet Nam, China and Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia).

³⁵⁷ Ireland, Estonia, France, Norway, United Kingdom, United States and Mexico.

³⁵⁸ Ireland, Estonia, France, Norway, United Kingdom and Mexico.

³⁵⁹ See [S/PV.8875](#).

with the urgency that the situation demanded and appealed to all Council members to unify behind the efforts of the United Nations and its partners in Ethiopia.

Following the briefing of the Secretary-General, most Council members³⁶⁰ condemned or expressed regret at the decision of the Government of Ethiopia to expel eight key United Nations officials from the country. In that regard, the representative of Estonia said that the expulsion endangered the work of humanitarian aid workers in northern Ethiopia, where they already faced violence and harassment. The representative of the United States called the expulsion an affront to the Council, the United Nations and all Member States, as well as shared humanitarian principles, and stated that if calls for humanitarian access continued to go unheard, the Council should consider all tools at its disposal, including a Council resolution, to save lives and promote international peace and security. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed the view that pressure that involved the Council and threats regarding the adoption of resolutions were counterproductive. The representative of Ethiopia said that it was incomprehensible that the Council would be discussing a decision of a sovereign State and added that Ethiopia truly hoped that Council members would have the insight to leave the matter to the Government of Ethiopia and the United Nations. In addition to explaining the circumstances leading to the expulsion of eight United Nations staff members, he clarified that it was not Ethiopia's primary course of action, adding that Ethiopia had on multiple occasions explained its concerns to United Nations officials. In that regard, the representative of Ethiopia explained that on 8 July 2021, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Ethiopia had written a letter to the Secretariat explaining, in great detail, the misconduct by United Nations staff that required corrective measures. In response to the representative of Ethiopia, the Secretary-General took the floor for a second time.³⁶¹ He stated that he had no knowledge of any written document being provided by the Government of Ethiopia to any United Nations entity concerning any of the eight United Nations staff members who were expelled and asked the representative of Ethiopia to provide him with a copy of the document so that he could investigate what had happened within the United Nations.

On 8 November, the Council held a fourth meeting on the Tigray region,³⁶² at which it heard

³⁶⁰ Estonia, France, Norway, United Kingdom, United States, China, India, Viet Nam, Mexico and Russian Federation.

³⁶¹ For further information on participation, see part II, sect. VIII.

³⁶² See [S/PV.8899](#).

briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and by the High Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa. In her remarks, the Under-Secretary-General reported that Tigrayan forces had in recent days advanced southward towards Addis Ababa, in coordination with the Oromo Liberation Army, and that the Government of Ethiopia had declared a nationwide state of emergency. She said that the risk of Ethiopia descending into widening civil war was real, which would bring about a humanitarian catastrophe and consume the future of such an important country. The Under-Secretary-General also stated that the report of the joint investigation into the conflict in Tigray conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, covering the period between November 2020 and June 2021, had concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that all parties to the conflict, including the Ethiopian National Defence Forces, the Eritrean Defence Forces, the Amhara Special Forces and allied militia on one side and Tigrayan forces on the other, had committed violations of international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, indiscriminate attacks that resulted in civilian casualties and extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detentions, sexual and gender-based violence and forced displacement. She also said that the report underlined the steps that needed to be taken to ensure accountability for those acts.

In his statement, the High Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa noted that since his arrival in Ethiopia, on 4 November 2021, he had met with both the Prime Minister and the President of Ethiopia, as well as with the President of the Oromia region and Tigrayan leaders. Summarizing the discussions, he stated that all the leaders in Addis Ababa and in the north agreed individually that the differences between them were political and required a political solution through dialogue. The High Representative said that this constituted a window of opportunity that could collectively be tapped into to assist the people of Ethiopia to find a lasting solution to the ongoing crisis. He urged the Council to call on the international community to rally behind the African Union-led process so as to ensure coherence and unity of purpose in its peacekeeping efforts in the Horn of Africa, in particular in Ethiopia.

In the statements that followed, Council members³⁶³ referred to the Council's statement to the press adopted on 5 November 2021, in which the Council called for an immediate ceasefire and the commencement of political dialogue. At the meeting,³⁶⁴ the representatives of Ireland and Mexico expressed disappointment at the Council's failure to prevent an escalation of the crisis in Ethiopia. The representative of Mexico expressed confidence, however, that the Council had learned from past mistakes and that this time it would assume its responsibility to facilitate a political process that would lead to peace in Ethiopia. Most Council members³⁶⁵ also recognized the role of African regional and subregional organizations,

³⁶³ Ireland, China, United States and Russian Federation.

³⁶⁴ See [S/PV.8899](#).

³⁶⁵ Ireland, Tunisia (also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Norway, Viet Nam, China, France, India, Estonia, United States, Russian Federation and Mexico.

specifically the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, for their support for mediation efforts and assisting Ethiopia to find a solution to the Tigray crisis. The representative of China called for enhanced coordination between the United Nations and the African Union to promote nationwide peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia and for the international community, and the Council in particular, to give the time and space that was needed for the African Union and others to make use of their good offices. Furthermore, several Council members³⁶⁶ expressed concern at the use of hate speech and called for an end to the incitement to violence. In addition, the representative of the United Kingdom cautioned against the use of the state of emergency as an excuse to ignore human rights and international humanitarian law.

³⁶⁶ Ireland, Tunisia (also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Norway, Viet Nam, United Kingdom, France, United States and Mexico.

Table 1
Meetings: peace and security in Africa

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8812 2 July 2021			Ethiopia	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	12 Council members, ^{a,b} all invitees	
S/PV.8816 8 July 2021			Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan ^c	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8843 26 August 2021			Ethiopia		Secretary-General, 12 Council members, ^a invitee	
S/PV.8860 15 September 2021					One Council member (India)	S/PRST/2021/18

**Part I. Consideration of questions under the responsibility of
the Security Council for the maintenance of
international peace and security**

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8875 6 October 2021			Ethiopia		Secretary-General, 12 Council members, ^d invitee	
S/PV.8899 8 November 2021			Ethiopia	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, High Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa	12 Council members, ^d all invitees	
S/PV.8903 12 November 2021		Report of the Secretary-General on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (S/2021/940)	Chad	Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, President of the Burkina Faso chapter of the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the Economic Community of West African States Space	12 Council members, ^f all invitees ^g	

^a China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

^b The United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State for South Asia, North Africa, the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

^c Egypt was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Ethiopia was represented by its Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy; and the Sudan was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

^d China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

^f China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.

^g Chad spoke on behalf of the Group of Five for the Sahel.

Table 2
Videoconferences: peace and security in Africa

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
18 May 2021	S/2021/484	Letter dated 20 May 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
19 May 2021	S/2021/490	Letter dated 21 May 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	S/PRST/2021/10