

36. Threats to international peace and security

In 2023, the Council held 30 meetings under the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security”, of which 24 took the form of a briefing, two were convened to adopt a decision, while four were held in the debate format.¹⁰⁸⁹ In 2023, the Council adopted two decisions under this item, while one draft resolution was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes. One of the meetings was held jointly under this item and the item entitled “Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine”. More information about the meetings, including participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in the table below. In addition, Council members held informal consultations of the whole to discuss different subjects under this item.¹⁰⁹⁰

During the period under review, a wide range of topics were considered under the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security”, most of which concerned the war in Ukraine. Furthermore, the Council considered the question of the 2022 explosions in the Baltic Sea, which had resulted in damage to the Nord Stream submarine pipelines, at four of its meetings in 2023. Four other meetings were devoted to thematic issues, including the implications of sea-level rise for international peace and security; risks stemming from violations of the agreements regulating the export of weapons and military equipment; climate change and peace and security; and transnational organized crime, growing challenges and new threats, in connection with which the Council adopted one presidential statement. Consistent with prior practice, the Council also held three meetings and adopted one resolution under this item related to the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) established pursuant to resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#).¹⁰⁹¹

¹⁰⁸⁹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

¹⁰⁹⁰ For more information, see [A/78/2](#), part II.

¹⁰⁹¹ For further details on the establishment of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2016-2017*.

The Council held 19 meetings focused on the war in Ukraine under the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security”.¹⁰⁹² At those meetings, the Council considered, inter alia, matters relating to the freedom of religion in Ukraine, transfer of weapons and provision of military assistance to Ukraine, the issue of nuclear safety in the context of war in Ukraine, the anniversary of the Minsk agreements, reports of various forms of discrimination in Ukraine, as well as matters relating to terrorism and the various attacks.

In 2023, out of the total of 19 meetings focusing on the war in Ukraine, three were held in connection with matters relating to the freedom of religion in Ukraine.

On 17 January, the Council heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and by the Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Patriarchate of Moscow.¹⁰⁹³ The Assistant Secretary-General noted that the armed attack by the Russian Federation against Ukraine and the ensuing hostilities had brought the most severe forms of human rights and international humanitarian law violations into the everyday lives of people in Ukraine, putting at risk lives and causing massive displacement and destruction of civilian infrastructure. OHCHR expressed its concern about restrictions on the freedom of religion and association across Ukraine, in both territory controlled by the Government and occupied by the Russian Federation. The Assistant Secretary-General called on both parties to respect and ensure that the rights to the freedoms of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly, association, and religion could be exercised without discrimination by all. In his statement, the Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Patriarchate of Moscow called upon members of the Council to pay attention to the unlawful actions of the Ukrainian State authorities against the largest faith in the country and the many violations of the rights of the faithful that were guaranteed by the Charter of the United Nations and other international instruments.

¹⁰⁹² For more information about the items relating to Ukraine, see part I, sect. 20.

¹⁰⁹³ See [S/PV.9245](http://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire).

On 26 July, the Council heard a briefing by the Director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, with a focus on the freedom of religion and belief dimension and the protection of religious sites within the context of the war in Ukraine.¹⁰⁹⁴ She noted that restrictions on freedom of religion and the safety of religious communities across Ukraine were matters of grave concern.

Further, on 17 November, the Council heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and by the Vice-Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Relations with Society and Mass Media of the Patriarchate of Moscow.¹⁰⁹⁵ In her briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General reported that tensions between the Ukrainian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church of Ukraine increased following the Russian Federation's full-scale armed attack in February 2022, which had affected the freedom of religion in the territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine, with OHCHR documenting 10 cases of physical violence and six cases of threatened violence with inadequate response from the Ukrainian law enforcement, failing to sufficiently investigate incidents and take action to protect members of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. The Assistant Secretary-General further noted that OHCHR had continued to closely monitor how legislative developments in Ukraine might impact the enjoyment of the freedom of religion and expressed concern about the freedom of religion in the Ukrainian territory occupied by the Russian Federation. In his statement, the representative of the Patriarchate of Moscow urged Council members to abandon political differences and to adopt effective, immediate measures to protect the rights of worshippers in Ukraine. In their deliberations on this topic in the above meetings, Council members exchanged views on principles relating to the freedom of religion, violation of human rights and issues related to the destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine, with many members calling for de-escalation and cessation of hostilities and urging the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from Ukraine.

¹⁰⁹⁴ See [S/PV.9385](#). The Council also heard a briefing by a civil society representative who presented his views on the topic.

¹⁰⁹⁵ See [S/PV.9481](#).

In 2023, the Council heard nine briefings by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her Deputies, one of which was in relation to nuclear weapons, while the rest were in connection with reports of transfers of weapons and provision of military assistance to Ukraine.

Concerning the transfer of weapons, in their briefings, the representatives of the Office for Disarmament Affairs informed the Council throughout the year about publicly available data on provision of military assistance to Ukraine by a number of Governments, including heavy conventional armaments and munitions as well as heavier modern systems, and about the reports of States transferring weapons, such as combat drones, to the Russian armed forces for use in Ukraine.¹⁰⁹⁶ In all those briefings, the representatives of the Office for Disarmament Affairs recalled that the large-scale influx of weapons into any situation of armed conflict amplified concerns regarding the escalation of the conflict and risks of diversion, and in that context, referred to the available measures to counter the potential diversion of weapons and ammunition. More specifically, in relation to the reported counter-offensive by Ukrainian forces, at the Council meetings held since 29 June, the representatives of the Office for Disarmament Affairs also referred to the reported expansion of supply of arms and ammunition,¹⁰⁹⁷ while also noting since their briefing on 12 September that there had been reports related to the transfer and use of cluster munitions throughout the war, as well as those related to the transfer of depleted uranium tank ammunition to the Ukrainian forces.¹⁰⁹⁸ In that context, they called for an end to the use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions and referred to in the New Agenda for Peace, in which the Secretary-General had called on Member States to take concrete measures to address challenges related to diversion and encouraged them to commit to reducing the human cost of weapon, including by achieving the universality of treaties banning inhumane and indiscriminate weapons.¹⁰⁹⁹

On the issue of nuclear weapons, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs reported in her briefing on 31 March that the Russian Federation had announced on 25 March that it had reached an agreement with Belarus to station its non-strategic nuclear weapons in

¹⁰⁹⁶ See [S/PV.9256](#); [S/PV.9325](#); [S/PV.9364](#); [S/PV.9399](#); [S/PV.9415](#); [S/PV.9436](#); [S/PV.9457](#) and [S/PV.9501](#).

¹⁰⁹⁷ See [S/PV.9364](#); [S/PV.9399](#); [S/PV.9415](#); [S/PV.9436](#); [S/PV.9457](#) and [S/PV.9501](#).

¹⁰⁹⁸ See [S/PV.9415](#); [S/PV.9436](#); [S/PV.9457](#) and [S/PV.9501](#).

¹⁰⁹⁹ See also [A/77/CRP.1/Add.8](#).

Belarussian territory. She noted that the issue of so-called “nuclear sharing”, namely the hosting by a non-nuclear-weapon State of a nuclear-weapon State’s nuclear weapons was one that had existed for decades and had been debated intensely during the negotiations of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and subsequent discussions, including at the Review Conferences of the Parties to the Treaty.¹¹⁰⁰ The High Representative further stated that the war in Ukraine represented the most acute example of high risk of a nuclear weapon being used and called on all States to avoid taking any actions that could lead to escalation, mistake or miscalculation.

In their discussions on the above two topics, many Council members and other speakers shared their views on whether the provision of military assistance to Ukraine could be understood in the context of its right to self-defence pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter.¹¹⁰¹ Discussions also revolved around the need to respect Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity, the importance of compliance with the relevant Council resolutions to prevent proliferation of weapons, notably in the context of reported transfers of weapons from the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea to the Russian Federation in the context of war in Ukraine, with many Council members also referencing the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes and dialogue to end the conflict.

On 17 February, the Council heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and Americas in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, and by the former Special Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for the Minsk negotiations 2015-2019, marking the eighth anniversary for the adoption of resolution [2202 \(2015\)](#), in which the Council had endorsed the package of measures for the implementation of the Minsk agreements.¹¹⁰²

In his briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General stated that despite not having any formal role in the Minsk framework, over the years the United Nations had supported the

¹¹⁰⁰ See [S/PV.9300](#).

¹¹⁰¹ See [S/PV.9256](#), [S/PV.9300](#), [S/PV.9364](#), [S/PV.9399](#), [S/PV.9415](#), [S/PV.9436](#), [S/PV.9457](#) and [S/PV.9501](#). For more details on discussions concerning the right to self-defence pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter, see part VII, sect. X.

¹¹⁰² See [S/PV.9262](#). See also *Repertoire, Supplement 2014-2015*, part I. sect. 21.B.

implementation of the Minsk agreements and related measures, had expressed its full political support to all those involved in the Normandy format and had offered support, when requested and where appropriate, in line with Chapter VIII of the Charter, to some of the working groups under the OSCE-led Trilateral Contact Group, while remaining consistent in its principled support for the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.¹¹⁰³

The former Special Representative of the OSCE for the Minsk negotiations provided an overview of key events since the 2015 and expressed disappointment with the developments in Ukraine since 24 February 2022. In their discussion, speakers discussed issues relating to the challenges in the implementation of the Minsk agreements and the role of regional organizations in settling the conflict in Ukraine, notably the OSCE and the activities of its Special Monitoring Mission.

On 14 March, at the request of the Russian Federation, Council members convened for a meeting under this item at which they heard briefings by three civil society representatives with a focus on the issue of Russophobia in Ukraine.¹¹⁰⁴ During the discussion, speakers exchanged views about discrimination, hate speech and other human rights-related topics, as well as the various aspects of the war in Ukraine.

Additionally, on 30 May, the Council heard a briefing by the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) with a focus on the work of the Agency on nuclear safety and security and its safeguard verification activities across Ukraine since the beginning of the war.¹¹⁰⁵ The Director General underscored that the nuclear safety and security situation at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant in particular continued to be extremely fragile and dangerous and in that regard, referred to the five principles that the IAEA intended to start monitoring through its on-site mission, in order to prevent a nuclear accident and ensure the integrity of the plant. First, there should not be any attack of any kind from or against the plant; second, the plant should not be used as storage or as a base for heavy weapons; third, off-site power to the plant should not be put at risk; fourth, all structures, systems and components essential to the safe and

¹¹⁰³ See [S/PV.9262](#).

¹¹⁰⁴ See [S/PV.9280](#).

¹¹⁰⁵ See [S/PV.9334](#).

secure operation of the plant should be protected from attacks or acts of sabotage; and fifth, no action should be taken that undermined those principles. In the discussion, Council members expressed support for the efforts of the IAEA in ensuring the safety of nuclear facilities in Ukraine, called on the parties to commit to protecting the nuclear plants and underscored the importance of preventing any nuclear incidents.

On 6 June, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordination at a meeting held jointly under this item and the item entitled “Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine” with a focus on the situation in Kherson region.¹¹⁰⁶ The Under-Secretary-General indicated that the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant dam was one of the most significant incidents of damage to civilian infrastructure since the start of the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and noted that the United Nations and humanitarian organizations had already stepped up operations to try to address the impacts of that event. He reported that the United Nations had no access to independent information on the circumstances that had led to the destruction of the plant and dam, adding that installations such as dams had to receive special protection because their destruction could cause severe loss for the civilian population. In the discussion, the representative of the Russian Federation asserted that Ukraine had breached the dam of the Kakhovka plant on 6 June, while several other Council members held the view that the dam destruction was the result of the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine.¹¹⁰⁷ The representative of Ukraine attributed the attack on the dam to the Russian Federation and stated that it was a terrorist act. Council members also referred to the deployment of humanitarian support by the United Nations and discussed the implications of the incident for the safety of the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant.

At a meeting convened on 31 July, the Council heard briefings from the Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General at the United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) and a civil society activist with a focus on terrorism, during which the representative of the Secretariat explained that the General Assembly did not provide the UNOCT with the mandate to

¹¹⁰⁶ See [S/PV.9340](#). See also part I, sect. 20.

¹¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, (Albania, United States, United Kingdom, France and Japan).

investigate or ascertain the conduct of States and other actors, nor to determine what constituted an act of terrorism.¹¹⁰⁸ During the meeting, many speakers underscored the importance of respecting the principles of territorial integrity and sovereignty,¹¹⁰⁹ some presented their views on the right to self-defence,¹¹¹⁰ while several also called on the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from Ukraine.¹¹¹¹

In 2023, the Council held two meetings to discuss attacks in Donbas, Ukraine and Belgorod, Russian Federation, respectively, at which it heard briefings by the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations.

On 8 November, the Assistant Secretary-General informed the Council about the various attacks that had taken place throughout Ukraine since October, including in the Dnipro, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolayiv and Zaporizhzhya regions as well as the latest attack in Donetsk.¹¹¹² In that context, he urged all Member States to do their part to uphold the Charter of the United Nations, to prevent further escalation and spillover of the war and to lay the foundations for sustainable peace in line with the Charter, international law and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. In his statement, the representative of the Russian Federation asserted that the Ukrainian armed forces undertook mass shelling of densely populated areas of Donetsk on 7 November, while the representative of Ukraine pointed out that as long as Russian troops remained on the territory of his country and as long as they persisted in killing Ukrainians, Ukraine would continue to exercise its right to self-defence, in strict accordance with Article 51 of the Charter. During the discussion, Council members and other speakers called for de-escalation of conflict and cessation of hostilities,¹¹¹³ protection of civilians

¹¹⁰⁸ See [S/PV.9390](#).

¹¹⁰⁹ Ibid., (Switzerland, Ecuador, Japan, United States, China, France, Mozambique, United Arab Emirates, Brazil and Ukraine).

¹¹¹⁰ Ibid., (Russian Federation, Albania, Ecuador, United States, Ghana, France and Brazil).

¹¹¹¹ Ibid., (Switzerland, Malta, Japan, United States, Ghana, France and United Kingdom).

¹¹¹² See [S/PV.9470](#).

¹¹¹³ Ibid., (Gabon, Ghana, Brazil, Switzerland and China).

and respect for international humanitarian law,¹¹¹⁴ with many urging the Russian Federation to withdraw its troops from the occupied territories of Ukraine.¹¹¹⁵

On 30 December, the Council met to discuss an attack on Belgorod in the Russian Federation.¹¹¹⁶ In his briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General noted that, according to the Russian authorities, as a result of Ukrainian missile and rocket strikes on Belgorod, about 30 kilometres from the Ukrainian border, at least 18 civilians, including two children, had been reportedly killed, with at least 108 others, including 15 children, injured. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian authorities had reported new overnight Russian drone attacks targeting the Kherson region. He reiterated the Secretary-General's appeals for a de-escalation of tensions and for an end to attacks on civilians, population centres, residential areas, and civilian and energy infrastructure, and unequivocally condemned all attacks on cities, towns, and villages in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. In the discussion, Council members repeated their calls for cessation of hostilities,¹¹¹⁷ protection of civilians and respect for international humanitarian law,¹¹¹⁸ with several referring to the right of Ukraine to self-defence pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter.¹¹¹⁹

In 2023, the Council held four meetings under this item focusing on the gas leaks detected in the Nord Stream submarine pipelines following explosions in the Baltic Sea in 2022. On 21 February, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in which she recalled that following the detection of leaks from 26 to 29 September 2022, Danish, German and Swedish officials had announced that they would launch separate investigations, with the Russian Federation expressing interest to join those investigations and concern that a deliberate act of sabotage and terrorism might have been to blame for the explosions.¹¹²⁰ The Under-Secretary-General added that while those investigations were ongoing and the United Nations was not in a position to verify or confirm any of the claims

¹¹¹⁴ Ibid., (Gabon, United States, France, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, Malta, Mozambique, Ecuador and China).

¹¹¹⁵ Ibid., (Japan, United States, United Kingdom, Switzerland, Malta, Albania and Ukraine).

¹¹¹⁶ See [S/PV.9524](#).

¹¹¹⁷ Ibid., (Malta, Switzerland, Gabon, Mozambique, Ghana and China).

¹¹¹⁸ Ibid., (United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Japan, United States, Brazil, Switzerland, Gabon, Mozambique and Ghana).

¹¹¹⁹ Ibid., (France, United Kingdom, Malta, United States, Albania, Ecuador and Russian Federation).

¹¹²⁰ See [S/PV.9266](#).

relating to those incidents, one thing was certain: whatever had caused the incident, its fallout counted among the many risks the invasion of Ukraine had unleashed. The Council also heard briefings by two civil society representatives who presented their views on the issue and noted that the destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines constituted an act of international terrorism and represented a threat to the peace.

At the meeting held on 27 March,¹¹²¹ a draft resolution submitted by eight Member States was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes.¹¹²² The draft resolution would have requested the Secretary-General to establish an international independent investigation to conduct comprehensive, transparent and impartial international investigation of all aspects of the act of sabotage on the Nord Stream 1 and 2 gas pipelines, including identification of its perpetrators, sponsors, organizers and accomplices.¹¹²³

Two additional meetings on 11 July and 26 September were held in connection with the above topic, at which the Council heard briefings by various civil society briefers who presented their views on the issue of the Nord Stream gas leaks and called on the Council to shed light on those events.¹¹²⁴ In their discussions, Council members exchanged views on the ongoing investigations being conducted by Denmark, Germany and Sweden and whether a Council-mandated international independent investigation was required by a commission to be established by the Secretary-General.¹¹²⁵ Council members also continued to express concern over the Nord Stream incident and condemned it as an act of sabotage.

In 2023, the Council also held two meetings under the item “Threats to international peace and security” at which it discussed issues relating to climate change. On 14 February, at the initiative of Malta, which held the presidency for the month, the Council held a high-level

¹¹²¹ See [S/PV.9295](#).

¹¹²² The vote on the draft resolution, submitted by Belarus, China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, was as follows: *for*: Brazil, China, Russian Federation; *against*: none; *abstaining*: Albania, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

¹¹²³ See [S/2023/212](#). See also [S/2023/124](#), [S/2023/125](#), [S/2023/220](#) and [S/2023/223](#). For further details, see part IX, sect. VIII.

¹¹²⁴ See [S/PV.9373](#) and [S/PV.9424](#).

¹¹²⁵ See also [S/2023/126](#), [S/2023/193](#), [S/2023/517](#) and [S/2023/627](#). For more information on the practice of the Council concerning fact-finding and investigative functions, see part VI, sect. II.

open debate under the sub-item entitled “Sea-level rise: implications for international peace and security”.¹¹²⁶ The Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Romania in his capacity as Co-Chair of the International Law Commission Study Group on sea level rise, and the Director of Climate Change of the Pacific Community and President of Tofia Niue.¹¹²⁷

The Secretary-General warned that sea level rise was not only a threat in itself, but also a threat multiplier, and added that the impact of rising seas was already creating new sources of instability and conflict.¹¹²⁸ In that context, he highlighted three areas of action: (i) addressing the climate crisis as the root cause of rising seas; (ii) broadening the understanding of the root causes of insecurity, including poverty, discrimination, inequality, human rights violations and environmental disasters; and (iii) addressing the consequences of rising sea levels for legal frameworks and human rights. The Secretary-General concluded that the Council had a critical role to play in mobilizing the political will to address the devastating security challenges posed by rising seas.

The President of the General Assembly held the view that the issue of climate change demanded focus and coherence across the United Nations system, which for the General Assembly meant accelerating action on climate and water, and for the Economic and Social Council, it meant addressing the social and economic aspects, while the Security Council also had a role to play if the issue was to be tackled through a whole-of-United Nations approach.

The Co-Chair of the International Law Commission Study Group on sea-level rise underscored that sea-level rise posed a real risk to more than two thirds of United Nations Member States, which were likely to be affected directly or indirectly, highlighting that it posed an existential threat to low-lying coastal States, especially small island developing States, which might consider their statehood and sovereignty in danger. Among the options for dealing with the security implications of sea-level rise, he referred to the physical protection of coasts as well

¹¹²⁶ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 2 February 2023 ([S/2023/79](#)).

¹¹²⁷ See [S/PV.9260](#) and [S/PV.9260 \(Resumption 1\)](#).

¹¹²⁸ See [S/PV.9260](#).

as to the use of international law, noting that the submerging of land posed obvious threats to the territorial integrity of States, which was a novel situation for international law.

In her statement, the Director of Climate Change of the Pacific Community and President of Tofia Niue provided an overview of the threats posed by sea level rise and climate change to the security of small island developing States and referred to some of the possible solutions to address those threats.

Additionally, on 13 June, at the initiative of the United Arab Emirates, which held the presidency for the month,¹¹²⁹ the Council held a high-level open debate under the sub-item entitled “Climate change, peace and security”, at which it heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Juan Manuel Santos Calderón, former President of Colombia, Nobel Peace Laureate and Member of the Elders, as well as a climate, peace and security expert at the Consortium on International Agricultural Research.¹¹³⁰

In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations noted, inter alia, that alongside other cross-border challenges, environmental degradation and extreme weather events, amplified by climate change, were increasingly challenging the ability of United Nations peace operations to implement their mandates.¹¹³¹ The former President of Colombia maintained that the consequences of climate change and conflict very clearly converged and called on the Council to step up and play its part in addressing the unprecedented challenge of climate insecurity, working with other United Nations entities and other international institutions to find sustainable and just solutions. In her statement, the representative of the Consortium on International Agricultural Research drew the attention of the Council to several climate and peace and security issues of importance to the Arab region, which she noted should be anchored in prevention, resilience, risk mitigation, justice and equity.

In their discussions during the two meetings references above, speakers exchanged views on, inter alia, the extent to which the topics of rising sea levels and climate change represented a

¹¹²⁹ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 5 June 2023 ([S/2023/408](#)).

¹¹³⁰ See [S/PV.9345](#) and [S/PV.9345 \(Resumption 1\)](#).

¹¹³¹ See [S/PV.9345](#).

threat to international peace and security, as well as on the mandate of the Council and other organs for dealing with those matters.¹¹³²

In the reporting period, the Council also convened one meeting under this item to discuss risks stemming from violations of agreements on the export of weapons. On 10 April, at the initiative of the Russian Federation, which held the presidency for the month,¹¹³³ the Council held an open debate under the sub-item entitled “Risks stemming from violations of the agreements regulating the export of weapons and military equipment”.¹¹³⁴ In her briefing to the Council, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs stated that illicit and unregulated arms transfers could instigate, fuel and prolong armed conflict, armed violence, terrorism and crime; they could destabilize entire regions, contribute to and enable human rights abuses and lead to violations of arms embargoes. To respond to the risks associated with illicit and unregulated arms transfers, she noted that States had established a number of international, regional and bilateral arms control treaties, agreements and frameworks to prevent and eradicate the illicit trade in, and diversion of, conventional arms, to regulate the international arms trade and to promote transparency in weapons transfers. The High Representative cited several measures aimed at countering the potential diversion of weapons and ammunition and encouraged Member States to participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and to join the Arms Trade Treaty. During the discussion, Council members and other speakers exchanged views about the risks posed by the illicit diversion of arms and the available mechanisms to prevent the trafficking and proliferation of arms.

In 2023, consistent with prior practice, the Council heard two briefings under this item focused on the work of UNITAD and convened a third meeting to adopt a resolution extending its mandate. On 7 June and 4 December, further to the two biannual reports on the activities of the Investigative Team,¹¹³⁵ the Council heard briefings by the Special Adviser and Head of

¹¹³² For more details about the discussions in these two meetings, see part V, sect. I.

¹¹³³ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 3 April 2023 ([S/2023/243](#)).

¹¹³⁴ See [S/PV.9301](#).

¹¹³⁵ See [S/2023/367](#) and [S/2023/882](#).

UNITAD during which he reported on the progress made in the investigative activities of the Team.

On 7 June, the Special Adviser stated that UNITAD had continued to expand and develop, through professional investigative work, pioneering criminal knowledge about ISIL and addressing the concerns and considerations of each victim group in Iraqi society.¹¹³⁶ Over the past months, UNITAD had prioritized and intensified the line of inquiry into ISIL crimes involving the use of chemical agents in the vicinity of Taza Khurmatu, continued to make progress on case-assessment reports on gender-based crimes, crimes against children and crimes committed against the Sunni population in Al-Anbar and against the Christian communities in Nineveh, while the investigations into ISIL attacks against the Yazidi and the Shia communities also continued. The Special Adviser told the Council that competent courts, admissible and reliable evidence, and an appropriate legal framework were required for UNITAD to be successful in holding ISIL members accountable for their crimes. He further reported that UNITAD had begun to contribute to the preparation of future trials by intensifying cooperation with counterparts in the Iraqi judiciary to jointly build cases. In addition, the Team was supporting 17 third-State jurisdictions, conducting witness interviews, and providing expert testimonies and technical analysis in criminal proceedings against alleged members and supporters of ISIL.

On 15 September, taking note of the request from the Government of Iraq for a non-extendable one-year extension of the mandate of the Special Adviser and the Team contained in its letter dated 5 September,¹¹³⁷ the Council adopted resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), extending the mandate of UNITAD until 17 September 2024 only.¹¹³⁸ By the same resolution, the Council further took note of the request from the Government of Iraq for UNITAD to promote national accountability in Iraq for members of ISIL/Da'esh and those who provided assistance and financing to this terrorist organization by providing the evidence it had to the Government of Iraq within the next year.¹¹³⁹ The Council requested the Secretary-General to

¹¹³⁶ See [S/PV.9341](#).

¹¹³⁷ See [S/2023/654](#).

¹¹³⁸ Resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), para. 2.

¹¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 3.

submit to the Council, no later than 15 January 2024, a report setting out recommendations for implementing that request with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq.¹¹⁴⁰ It also requested UNITAD, with the approval of the Government of Iraq, to determine the modalities for evidence sharing with third States and further requested that UNITAD communicates to the Government of Iraq on what previous evidence had been shared with third States.¹¹⁴¹ In addition, the Special Adviser was requested to continue to submit and present reports to the Council on the activities of the Team every 180 days and to develop, by 15 March 2024, in consultations with the Government of Iraq, a roadmap for the completion of the Team's mandate, including with respect to Iraq's request set out in paragraph 3 and the necessary steps for the Team's closure.¹¹⁴²

Following the adoption of resolution [2697 \(2023\)](#), on 4 December, the Special Adviser reported that UNITAD had adjusted its priorities, notably by ensuring that its investigations concluded in a deliberate and orderly manner and by shifting the investigative resources of the Team to expedite less advanced investigations and their planned outputs.¹¹⁴³ In that context, the Special Adviser said that it was important to keep in mind that it would not be likely for UNITAD to deliver final outputs by September 2024 on all the lines of inquiry it had initiated and underscored that the Team would be deprioritizing what could not be completed within one year. During the reporting period, UNITAD had developed the first joint case file of alleged ISIL perpetrators in third States and shared it with the State concerned; worked with Iraqi counterparts in supporting Iraq to establish a legal basis for investigating and prosecuting international crimes; and continued its work on evidence management. Affirming that it remained up to Iraq to exercise its sovereign right to decide on the future of UNITAD, the Special Adviser stressed that a premature and abrupt ending would only be a loss for all concerned, which is why he urged the Government of Iraq and Council members to give due consideration to the end state of the mandate of UNITAD rather than the end date. In their discussions, Council members continued to express support for the work of UNITAD and deliberated on the progress achieved in its investigations and cooperation with the Iraqi authorities.

¹¹⁴⁰ Ibid., para. 4.

¹¹⁴¹ Ibid., para. 5.

¹¹⁴² Ibid., para. 6.

¹¹⁴³ See [S/PV.9493](#).

The Council also discussed issues pertaining to organized crime under this item in 2023. On 7 December, at the initiative of Ecuador, which held the presidency for the month,¹¹⁴⁴ the Council held a high-level open debate with a focus on transnational organized crime, growing challenges and new threats.¹¹⁴⁵ At the meeting, the Council heard briefings from the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), a professor of international affairs at Harvard University, as well as the founder and General Director of Women in Action for Women. The Secretary-General recalled that the Council had long recognized the danger posed by transnational organized crime to international peace and security, including in resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#), and in that context, he listed three priorities for action: (i) strengthening cooperation to target criminal dynamics that fuel violence and prolong cycles of conflict; (ii) strengthening the rule of law in support of efforts to finding peaceful solutions to conflicts and tackling transnational organized crime's multifaceted threats; and, (iii) strengthening prevention and fostering inclusion by redoubling efforts to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the best instrument for creating economic and social conditions in which organized crime could not succeed.¹¹⁴⁶

In her statement, the Executive Director of UNODC cited examples of impact of organized crime on security situations in various locations, including Haiti, the Sahel, Myanmar, the Amazon basin and European port cities, and encouraged Council members to consider (i) supporting and investing in improved data collection in order better anticipate and monitor trafficking and organized crime dynamics and respond proactively; (ii) integrating measures against organized crime in peace and security interventions and resolutions; and (iii) promoting the inclusion of organized crime prevention in sustainable development cooperation frameworks.

In their discussion, Council members and other speakers reflected on the role of the Council in tackling the issue of transnational organized crime and its consequences for international peace and security, as well as on the role of the various regional and sub-regional mechanisms and initiatives. Moreover, at the same meeting, the Council adopted a presidential

¹¹⁴⁴ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 1 December 2023 ([S/2023/933](#)).

¹¹⁴⁵ See [S/PV.9497](#) and [S/PV.9497 \(Resumption 1\)](#).

¹¹⁴⁶ See [S/PV.9497](#).

statement in which it, inter alia, recognized the need for Member States to take appropriate measures consistent with international law to address the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons; emphasized the importance of Member States taking appropriate measures to prevent the illicit trafficking of weapons to transnational criminal organizations and terrorists, and to prevent, within that context, diversion, as well as looting or acquiring small arms and light weapons from national stockpiles by terrorists and organized criminal groups and networks.¹¹⁴⁷

Meetings: Threats to international peace and security, 2023

<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>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.9245 17 January 2023			Ukraine	Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Chairman of the Department of External Church Relations of the Patriarchate of Moscow	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.9256 8 February 2023			Ukraine	High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, civil peace activist	All Council members, all invitees ^a	
S/PV.9260 S/PV.9260 (Resumption 1) 14 February 2023	Sea-level rise: implications for international peace and security Letter dated 2 February 2023 from the Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/79)		53 Member States ^b	President of the General Assembly, Co-Chair of the International Law Commission Study Group on Sea-level Rise, Director of Climate Change of the Pacific Community and President of Tofia Niue, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Special Representative of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) to the United Nations, representative of the Permanent Observer	Secretary-General, all Council members, ^c all invitees ^d	

¹¹⁴⁷ See [S/PRST/2023/6](#).

			of the Holy See to the United Nations		
S/PV.9262 17 February 2023		Belarus, Germany, Ukraine	Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and Americas in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, Special Representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe for the Minsk negotiations from 2015-2019	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.9266 21 February 2023			Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, political activist and former United States Central Intelligence Agency officer	All Council members, all invitees ^e	
S/PV.9280 14 March 2023		Ukraine	Executive Director of Rossiya Segodnya, Deputy Head of Ukrainian Union of Law Workers, Trade Professor of History at Yale University	All Council members, all invitees ^f	
S/PV.9295 27 March 2023	Draft resolution submitted by eight Member States ^g (S/2023/212)	Six Member States ^h		14 Council members ⁱ	Draft resolution S/2023/212 not adopted 3-0-12 ^j
S/PV.9300 31 March 2023		Belarus, Estonia, Poland, Ukraine	High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Head of the Delegation of the European Union	All Council members, all invitees ^k	
S/PV.9301 10 April 2023	Risks stemming from violations of the agreements regulating the export of	Nine Member States ^l	High Representative for Disarmament Affairs	All Council members, all invitees ^m	

	weapons and military equipment			
	Letter dated 3 April 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/243)			
S/PV.9325 18 May 2023		Ukraine	Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs	All Council members, invitees
S/PV.9334 30 May 2023		Ukraine	Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency	All Council members, invitees
S/PV.9340 ⁿ 6 June 2023		Latvia, Poland, Ukraine	Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees ^o
S/PV.9341 7 June 2023	Letter dated 22 May 2023 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2023/367)	Iraq	Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD	All Council members, invitees
S/PV.9345 S/PV.9345 (Resumption 1) 13 June 2023	Climate change, peace and security	53 Member States ^p	Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations; former President of Colombia, Nobel	All Council members, ^q all invitees ^r

	<p>Letter dated 5 June 2023 from the Permanent Representative of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2023/408)</p>		<p>Peace Laureate and member of The Elders; Climate, peace and security expert at Consortium on International Agricultural Research; Head of the Delegation of the European Union; Permanent Observer of the African Union; Permanent Observer and Head of the Delegation of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Permanent Observer and Head of Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross</p>	
<p>S/PV.9364 29 June 2023</p>		<p>Ukraine</p>	<p>High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, founder and editor-in-chief of The Grayzone, scholar specializing in small arms and munitions, professor at the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies</p>	<p>All Council members, all invitees</p>
<p>S/PV.9373 11 July 2023</p>			<p>Two independent journalists</p>	<p>All Council members, invitees</p>
<p>S/PV.9385 26 July 2023</p>		<p>Ukraine</p>	<p>Director of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, civil society briefer</p>	<p>All Council members,^s all invitees Procedural vote (rule 39) 3-0-12^t</p>
<p>S/PV.9390 31 July 2023</p>		<p>Ukraine</p>	<p>Deputy to the Under-Secretary-General at the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, civil activist</p>	<p>All Council members, all invitees</p>
<p>S/PV.9399 17 August 2023</p>		<p>Ukraine</p>	<p>High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, journalist</p>	<p>All Council members, all invitees</p>

S/PV.9415 12 September 2023		Ukraine	High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, journalist	All Council members, all invitees
S/PV.9419 15 September 2023	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2023/669)			China, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States Resolution 2697 (2023) 15-0-0
S/PV.9424 26 September 2023			Journalist, political commentator	All Council members, all invitees
S/PV.9436 13 October 2023		Ukraine	Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, political analyst	All Council members, all invitees
S/PV.9457 27 October 2023		Ukraine	Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, civil society briefer	All Council members, all invitees
S/PV.9470 8 November 2023		Ukraine	Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations	All Council members, all invitees
S/PV.9481 17 November 2023		Ukraine	Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights in the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Vice-Chairman of the Synodal Department for Church Relations with Society and Mass Media of the Moscow Patriarchate	All Council members, all invitees
S/PV.9493 4 December 2023	Letter dated 16 November 2023 from the Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD addressed to the President of the Security	Iraq	Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD	All Council members, all invitees

ⁱ Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States. The representative of Mozambique did not make a statement in his national capacity.

^j *For*: Brazil, China, Russian Federation; *against*: none; *abstaining*: Albania, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

^k The representative of Estonia also spoke on behalf of Latvia and Lithuania.

^l Belarus, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Mexico, Pakistan, Poland and South Africa.

^m Belarus was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

ⁿ The 9340th meeting was held under two items, namely “Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine” and “Threats to international peace and security”. See also part II, sec. II.

^o The representative of Latvia also spoke on behalf of Estonia and Lithuania.

^p Austria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Denmark, Egypt, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Morocco, the Netherlands, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Ukraine and Viet Nam.

^q The United Arab Emirates was represented by its Minister for Climate Change and Environment; Gabon was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Ghana was represented by its Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation; Mozambique was represented by its Minister of State for Administration and Public Service; the United States was represented by its Special Presidential Envoy for Climate; Switzerland was represented by its State Secretary.

^r Hungary was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade; the representative of Canada also spoke on behalf of Australia and New Zealand; the representative of Egypt spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States; the representative of Germany spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends on Climate and Security; the representative of Denmark also spoke on behalf of Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden; the representative of Papua New Guinea also spoke on behalf of the 14 member States of the Pacific Islands Forum and the representative of the Marshall Islands spoke also on behalf of the 12 Pacific small island developing States.

^s The representative of the Russian Federation took the floor three times.

^t *For*: Brazil, China and Russian Federation; *against*: none; *abstaining*: Albania, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^u Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark (spoke also on behalf of Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden), Egypt, El Salvador, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Italy, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Panama, Paraguay, the Philippines, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Sierra Leone, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Türkiye, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

^v Ecuador was represented by its President; Mozambique was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Ghana was represented by the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration.