

Videoconferences: United Nations peacekeeping operations

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
30 March 2020 ^a	S/2020/268	Letter dated 31 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2518 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/249
4 June 2020	S/2020/514	Letter dated 8 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
7 July 2020	S/2020/674	Letter dated 9 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
28 August 2020	S/2020/856	Letter dated 28 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2538 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/851
14 September 2020	S/2020/911	Letter dated 16 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
4 November 2020	S/2020/1092	Letter dated 6 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

^a Owing to technical difficulties, instead of an open videoconference to announce the vote on resolution [2518 \(2020\)](#) the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

24. International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

In 2020, the Council held one meeting for the issuance of a presidential statement related to the work of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals.⁶⁶¹ More information on the meeting, including on the participants and outcome, is provided in table 1 below. Council members also held a total of three open videoconferences and adopted one resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter in connection with the item. The resolution was announced in an open videoconference in accordance with the procedures developed during the

COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁶² More information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below.

On 28 February, the Council issued a presidential statement by which it recalled that the Mechanism should be a small, temporary and efficient structure, whose functions and size would diminish over time.⁶⁶³ It also recalled its decision that the Mechanism should operate for an initial period of four years starting from 1 July 2012 and its further decision that the Mechanism should continue to operate for subsequent periods of two

⁶⁶¹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II; on the International Residual Mechanism for International Tribunals, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2018*; and on the matters considered under the item, see *Repertoire, Supplement 1996–1999 to 2004–2007*.

⁶⁶² For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁶⁶³ [S/PRST/2020/4](#), second paragraph.

years, further to its review by the Council.⁶⁶⁴ The Council requested the Mechanism to present by 15 April 2020 its report on the progress of its work since the last review of the Mechanism in June 2018, including in completing its functions, with detailed schedules for the proceedings currently under consideration and factors relevant to projected completion dates.⁶⁶⁵ By the presidential statement, the Council requested the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals to carry out a thorough examination of the Mechanism's report and of the report on the evaluation of the methods and work of the Mechanism by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), and to present its views and any findings or recommendations for the Council's consideration in its review of the work of the Mechanism.⁶⁶⁶

On 8 June, Council members held a videoconference⁶⁶⁷ in which they heard the semi-annual briefings by the President of the Mechanism and by its Prosecutor. At the meeting, the President presented the latest report on the work of the Mechanism, submitted pursuant to paragraph 16 of Security Council resolution 1966 (2010).⁶⁶⁸ In their statements, the President and the Prosecutor affirmed that despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the Mechanism had remained operational and ensured full business continuity in an effective manner.⁶⁶⁹ While the pandemic had affected in-court proceedings, cases had progressed with relatively few disruptions. Nonetheless, cases that were on track to conclude by the end of 2020 were then expected to conclude in the first part of 2021. In addition to providing a detailed account of the trials and proceedings during the reporting period, the President and the Prosecutor highlighted the arrest of Félicien Kabuga and the confirmation of the death of Augustin Bizimana, two of the three main fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, and thanked the contribution of France and the other Member States and actors in the achievements. The Prosecutor affirmed that the role of the Council had been decisive in that regard, by repeatedly calling upon all Member States to provide cooperation in the search for the fugitives and assisting the Mechanism to obtain the intelligence and information needed to move the investigations forward. In that context, the President and the Prosecutor encouraged cooperation and trust in bringing more fugitives to justice. With regard to the

situation of the nine acquitted and released persons in Arusha, the President reiterated that the Mechanism could not resolve the matter on its own and urged the Council's support to help end that "untenable situation". Concerning early release, the President reported on a revised Practice Direction on applications for pardon, commutation of sentence or early release to clarify the procedures involved and ensure a streamlined process. Marking the twenty-fifth anniversaries of the genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica, the President reminded delegations of the perils of endemic hatred, division and denial. The Prosecutor expressed regret that he had repeatedly reported to the Council that the denial of crimes and glorification of convicted war criminals remained immense challenges and called upon all officials and public figures to publicly condemn such acts. The Prosecutor concluded by welcoming the recognition in the report of OIOS⁶⁷⁰ of his Office's commitment to the Council's vision of the Mechanism as "a small, temporary and efficient structure" and to have also favourably assessed the Mechanism's work and innovative methods.⁶⁷¹

During the discussion, Council members welcomed the Mechanism's efforts aimed at limiting as much as possible the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its activities. Council members also commended the international cooperation with the Office of the Prosecutor, which had successfully resulted in the arrest of Félicien Kabuga. In that connection, several speakers reiterated their calls on relevant Member States to provide the necessary assistance to the Office of the Prosecutor with the search and arrest of the remaining six fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda.⁶⁷² The representative of South Africa acknowledged the country's lack of cooperation concerning a fugitive located on its territory in mid-2018. He expressed regret that challenges presented by South Africa's domestic law had unfortunately constrained the country's cooperation until December 2019 and noted, however, that this had since been addressed. Several delegations applauded the Mechanism's efforts to integrate a gender perspective into its work and activities.⁶⁷³ Speakers welcomed the fact that the Mechanism had implemented most of the recommendations made by

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, third paragraph.

⁶⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, fifth paragraph.

⁶⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, sixth paragraph.

⁶⁶⁷ See [S/2020/527](#).

⁶⁶⁸ See [S/2020/309](#).

⁶⁶⁹ See [S/2020/527](#).

⁶⁷⁰ [S/2020/236](#).

⁶⁷¹ See [S/2020/527](#).

⁶⁷² Belgium, Estonia, France, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.

⁶⁷³ Dominican Republic, Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.

OIOS in 2018 and 2019.⁶⁷⁴ In that connection and owing to the impact of COVID-19 on the anticipated timelines, some Council members encouraged the management of the Mechanism to make the necessary adjustments to implement the recommendations of OIOS so as to adhere to clear and focused projections of completion timelines.⁶⁷⁵

On 25 June, the Council adopted, not unanimously, resolution [2529 \(2020\)](#) under Chapter VII of the Charter, by which it appointed the Prosecutor of the Mechanism with effect from 1 July 2020 until 30 June 2022.⁶⁷⁶ In the resolution, the Council continued to urge all States to intensify their cooperation with and render all necessary assistance to the Mechanism, in particular to achieve the arrest and surrender of all remaining fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda as soon as possible.⁶⁷⁷ In that regard, the Council welcomed the arrest of Félicien Kabuga, indicted for genocide and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Rwanda in 1994, commended the cooperation between the Office of the Prosecutor, law enforcement and judicial authorities in France and the other actors that had contributed to the arrest of the fugitive, and recognized that it was an important step in terms of cooperation with the Mechanism.⁶⁷⁸ The Council welcomed the report submitted by the Mechanism to the Council and the report of OIOS on the evaluation of the methods and work of the Mechanism.⁶⁷⁹ In that regard, the Council requested the Mechanism to implement the recommendations made by the Informal Working Group on International Tribunals and to continue to take steps to further enhance its efficiency and effective and transparent management, including the production of clear and focused projections of completion timelines at the earliest stage possible and disciplined adherence thereto.⁶⁸⁰ The Council also requested the Mechanism to include in its six-monthly reports to the Council information on progress achieved in implementing resolution [2529 \(2020\)](#).⁶⁸¹ With a view to strengthening independent oversight of the Mechanism, the Council recalled that, as set out in its presidential statement of 28 February 2020, future reviews carried out pursuant to paragraph 16 of resolution [1966 \(2010\)](#) should include evaluation

reports sought from OIOS with respect to the methods and work of the Mechanism.⁶⁸² In the explanation of the vote submitted by the delegation of the Russian Federation,⁶⁸³ that delegation noted that it had consistently abstained in the voting on draft resolutions on the extension of the work of the Mechanism because of its unsatisfactory work, which continued not to allow the Council to proceed with its legal closure. One of the major problems raised by the delegation was the absence of a judicial planning system. Additionally, the delegation expressed concern about the protection of the rights of persons detained under the authority of the Mechanism, in particular the quality and timeliness of the medical care provided to them.

On 14 December, in an open videoconference,⁶⁸⁴ Council members heard the second of the semi-annual briefings by the President of the Mechanism and its Prosecutor, in which they presented the latest progress report on the work of the Mechanism.⁶⁸⁵ During the videoconference,⁶⁸⁶ the President of the Mechanism reflected on the tenth anniversary of the adoption of resolution [1966 \(2010\)](#) and on how the flexible approach adopted by the Mechanism during the COVID-19 global pandemic had enabled the Mechanism to remain operational. In view of the latest developments, the President stated that the Mechanism was poised to conclude a significant proportion of its pending judicial caseload by the end of May 2021. The President and the Prosecutor provided details about their activities and results during the reporting period. They also laid out the priorities for the Mechanism to fulfil its mandate, including the search for the remaining fugitives at large indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the relocation of the nine persons acquitted and released by the Tribunal, and assistance to national jurisdictions prosecuting international crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In that respect, the President noted that the Mechanism was gratified to note the terms of resolution [2529 \(2020\)](#), in which the Council urged all States to intensify their cooperation with, and render all the necessary assistance to, the Mechanism regarding the remaining Rwanda Tribunal fugitives, as well as regarding the protracted situation of the nine acquitted and released individuals in Arusha. The Prosecutor added that for that work to be successfully completed, it was critical for the Council to send an unmistakable message that Member States

⁶⁷⁴ Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and United Kingdom.

⁶⁷⁵ Indonesia and Russian Federation.

⁶⁷⁶ Resolution [2529 \(2020\)](#), para. 1.

⁶⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 3.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, para. 5.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 7. See also [S/2020/309](#) and [S/2020/236](#).

⁶⁸⁰ Resolution [2529 \(2020\)](#), para. 9.

⁶⁸¹ *Ibid.*, para. 10.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, para. 14.

⁶⁸³ See [S/2020/602](#).

⁶⁸⁴ See [S/2020/1236](#).

⁶⁸⁵ See [S/2020/763](#).

⁶⁸⁶ See [S/2020/1236](#).

should treat the matter as an urgent priority and offer his Office their full cooperation.

Council members commended the Mechanism for the measures taken to efficiently continue its operations despite the constraints associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, welcoming, in particular, the fact that in-court proceedings, previously postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions, had resumed in August 2020. Delegations welcomed the progress made in important rulings, including *Prosecutor v. Ratko Mladić* and *Prosecutor v. Stanišić and Simatović*, as well as the transfer of Félicien Kabuga to the Mechanism's custody and the subsequent commencement of the new pretrial proceedings in his case. Several delegations acknowledged the issue of relocating individuals who had been acquitted and released by the Rwanda Tribunal and expressed hope that the matter would be resolved.⁶⁸⁷ In connection with the remaining six fugitives indicted by the Tribunal, a majority of Council members urged States, especially States where fugitives were suspected of being at large, to intensify their cooperation with the Mechanism and to arrest and surrender all of the remaining fugitives.⁶⁸⁸ In that regard, the delegation of South Africa assured Council members that the recommendations made by the Prosecutor would

receive the necessary attention by the Government and reaffirmed South Africa's determination to continue all efforts to trace and surrender the fugitives from justice. Additionally, the delegation of the Russian Federation stated that although in resolution [2529 \(2020\)](#) the Council had indicated the need to uphold the rights of persons held in custody, including the right to medical attention, the report failed to inform the Council on how those rights were being implemented. The delegation expressed particular concern regarding the health of General Ratko Mladić. Marking the commemorations of the events that had taken place in Rwanda and in the Western Balkans in the 1990s, a number of Council members condemned the continued denial of genocide and war crimes and the glorification of war criminals and urged those responsible to refrain from statements denying the crimes that had been committed.⁶⁸⁹

During the period under review, the Council also took note of the intention of the Secretary-General to renew the mandate of the President of the Mechanism for a new term of office, as well as to reappoint 25 nominated judges, all with effect from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022.⁶⁹⁰

⁶⁸⁷ China, Dominican Republic, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

⁶⁸⁸ Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United States and Viet Nam.

⁶⁸⁹ Belgium, France, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.

⁶⁹⁰ See [S/2020/580](#) and [S/2020/581](#). See also [S/2020/616](#). For more information on actions of the Council concerning the judges of the Mechanism, see part IV, sect. I.D, and part IX, sect. IV.

Table 1
Meeting: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

<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.8737 28 February 2020						S/PRST/2020/4

Table 2
Videoconferences: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
8 June 2020	S/2020/527	Letter dated 10 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
25 June 2020	S/2020/602	Letter dated 26 June 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2529 (2020) 14-0-1 ^a (adopted under Chapter VII) S/2020/590
14 December 2020	S/2020/1236	Letter dated 18 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

^a *For*: Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam; *against*: none; *abstaining*: Russian Federation.

25. Children and armed conflict

During the period under review, the Council held two meetings, including one high-level meeting, and issued two presidential statements in connection with the item entitled “Children and armed conflict”. The meetings took the form of a briefing and a debate.⁶⁹¹ More information on the meetings, including on the participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held one open videoconference under the item.⁶⁹² More information on the videoconference is provided in table 2 below.⁶⁹³

In 2020, discussions in the Council focused on the integration of child protection issues into peace processes and peace agreements, attacks against schools and the impact of armed conflict on children’s education, and the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict for 2019.⁶⁹⁴ Council members were briefed twice by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and by the Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF). The Council also received briefings by the Secretary-General, the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union and four representatives of civil society.

On 12 February, at the initiative of Belgium, which held the Presidency for the month,⁶⁹⁵ the Council held a high-level meeting under the sub-item entitled

“Integrating child protection into peace processes”.⁶⁹⁶ At the outset of the meeting, the Council issued a presidential statement renewing its call to Member States, United Nations entities, the Peacebuilding Commission and other parties concerned to integrate child protection provisions at the early stages of all peace processes.⁶⁹⁷ The Council commended the work by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, together with relevant child protection actors, to develop a United Nations practical guidance document on the integration of child protection into peace processes and encouraged the Secretary-General to disseminate the practical guidance broadly.⁶⁹⁸ In the statement, the Council encouraged mediators, facilitators and other negotiators, including Member States and regional and subregional organizations, to use the practical guidance note as a tool in peace and mediation processes.⁶⁹⁹

In his remarks at the meeting,⁷⁰⁰ the Secretary-General stated that children under the age of 18 made up more than half of the population in countries affected by war and they were among the most vulnerable. Notwithstanding the progress made in raising awareness on the issue of children in armed conflict in the past 21 years, including through the engagement of the Council, the figures on grave violations against children continued to rise. According

⁶⁹¹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II.

⁶⁹² See [A/75/2](#), part II, chap. 14.

⁶⁹³ For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁶⁹⁴ [S/2020/525](#).

⁶⁹⁵ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 5 February 2020 ([S/2020/97](#)).

⁶⁹⁶ See [S/PV.8721](#).

⁶⁹⁷ [S/PRST/2020/3](#), seventh paragraph.

⁶⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, ninth and tenth paragraphs. See the letter dated 11 February 2020 from the Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2020/114](#)), drawing attention to the guidance note entitled “Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict”.

⁶⁹⁹ [S/PRST/2020/3](#), thirteenth paragraph.

⁷⁰⁰ See [S/PV.8721](#).