

16. The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

During the period under review, the Council held four meetings, including one high-level meeting, under the newly added item entitled, “The situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela”. Two of the meetings took the form of briefings, one took the form of a debate and one was convened for the adoption of a decision.²⁹⁴ The Council failed to adopt two draft resolutions, owing to the negative vote of one or more permanent members in one case and the lack of the required number of votes in the other. More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.

The first meeting under the item was held on 26 January 2019,²⁹⁵ at the request of the United States and in the form of a debate, pursuant to the adoption by the Organization of American States of resolutions on the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.²⁹⁶ At the outset of the meeting, the provisional agenda was adopted following a procedural vote.²⁹⁷ In statements made before the vote and during the discussion, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed his delegation’s objection to the holding of the meeting, noting that the internal situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela did not represent a threat to international peace and security.²⁹⁸ Similar views were expressed by China and Equatorial Guinea. The representative of China added that his country was opposed to adding the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the Council’s agenda and that Venezuelan affairs needed to be handled and dealt with by the Venezuelans themselves. Other Council members²⁹⁹ underscored the responsibility of the Council to consider potential threats to international peace and security, such as the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Explaining his country’s abstention in the procedural vote, the representative of Indonesia affirmed his delegation’s belief that the meeting should have taken place under a different item, namely, under the item “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”. He stated, however, that the humanitarian situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela required proper attention. He added that the inclusion of the item to the Council’s

agenda needed to reflect a commitment to supporting the realization of sustained peace and stability in the country.³⁰⁰

At the meeting, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on the protracted crisis in the country, which had had a grave impact on the population, with high levels of political polarization, growing humanitarian needs and serious human rights concerns. She described the economic situation as dire and highlighted hyperinflation, shortages of food, medicine and basic supplies, and a deterioration in health services and basic infrastructure, which had resulted in more than 3 million Venezuelans leaving the country. The Under-Secretary-General informed the Council that, following the inauguration on 10 January 2019 of Nicolás Maduro Moros as President for a second six-year term, large-scale opposition protests culminated with the President of the opposition-led National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, announcing on 23 January that he did not recognize President Maduro or his Government, proclaiming himself interim President and pledging to form a transitional Government and call for elections. The Under-Secretary-General indicated that, in a statement issued on 24 January, the Secretary-General had offered his good offices to help resolve the crisis. After the briefing, Council members expressed differing views regarding the situation in the country. While some members called for new elections, others denounced foreign interference and called instead for a national dialogue process. Speakers from the region, including the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, also intervened and discussed the legitimacy of the Government of President Maduro and that of the transitional Government proclaimed by Juan Guaidó, offering contrasting views on the situation of the country and the way forward.

On 26 February 2019, the Council held a second meeting on the item,³⁰¹ at which it again heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The briefing was focused on the escalation of tensions in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela following attempts by the self-proclaimed interim Government to transport humanitarian aid into the country across the borders with Brazil and Colombia on 23 February, the temporary closure on 22 February of international bridges on the border with Colombia and of border crossings with Brazil by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

²⁹⁴ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

²⁹⁵ See [S/PV.8452](#).

²⁹⁶ [S/2019/80](#), annexes I and II.

²⁹⁷ See [S/PV.8452](#). For more information on decision-making and voting, see part II, sect. VIII.

²⁹⁸ See [S/PV.8452](#).

²⁹⁹ Peru, Kuwait, Germany, Poland, Belgium and Argentina.

³⁰⁰ For more information on the discussion, see part V, sect. I.B.

³⁰¹ See [S/PV.8472](#).

and the violence surrounding those events. The Under-Secretary-General recalled the statement made on 23 February by the Secretary-General, in which he reiterated his appeal to the Government that lethal force should not be used and called for all actors to lower tensions and prevent further escalation. After the briefing, speakers focused on the political, security, economic, humanitarian and human rights situation in the country and its regional consequences, calling on the Government and the opposition to exercise restraint, refrain from the use of force and engage in dialogue for the peaceful resolution of the crisis, while expressing support for regional and international initiatives for that purpose.

The Council held another meeting two days later, on 28 February 2019,³⁰² at which members voted on two draft resolutions, one proposed by the United States and one proposed by the Russian Federation. The Council failed to adopt the draft resolution submitted by the United States,³⁰³ which was voted on first, owing to the negative votes of two permanent members of the Council, namely, China and the Russian Federation. Under the draft resolution, the Council would have, *inter alia*, noted the constitutional authority of the democratically elected National Assembly, expressed its deep concern that the presidential elections held in May 2018 had been neither free nor fair and called for the start of a peaceful political process leading to free, fair and credible elections, with international electoral observation, in conformity with the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation³⁰⁴ was voted on second and was also not adopted, owing to the failure to obtain the required number of votes. Under that draft resolution, the Council would have expressed concern over threats to use force and attempts to intervene in the internal matters of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, urged the settlement of the situation in the country through peaceful means, within the framework of its Constitution and in full respect of its sovereignty, expressed support for initiatives aimed at reaching a political solution through a national dialogue, reaffirmed the primary role of the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in the initiation, organization, coordination and implementation of international assistance efforts and initiatives within its national territory and recalled that international assistance should be provided with its consent.

³⁰² See [S/PV.8476](#).

³⁰³ [S/2019/186](#).

³⁰⁴ [S/2019/190](#).

At the same meeting,³⁰⁵ in statements made before and after the votes, the representatives of China and the Russian Federation criticized the draft resolution submitted by the United States for not being consistent with international law. The representative of South Africa described the text of the draft resolution proposed by the United States as lacking impartiality and expressed concern regarding the lack of sufficient time provided for its consideration by Council members. He expressed the view that the draft submitted by the Russian Federation provided an assessment of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and reinforcement for the founding principles of the United Nations based on the sovereign equality of all its Members States. The representative of Indonesia affirmed that neither draft resolution was complete, because neither was comprehensive enough and both had been overpoliticized, and therefore would not be useful or helpful in ensuring the interests of the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The representative of the Russian Federation stated that the draft resolution proposed by his delegation could have helped Venezuelans solve their own problems without intervention from outside. Several other Council members³⁰⁶ expressed support for the text submitted by the United States, emphasizing the gravity of the situation in the country and the need for a political solution to the crisis, including through the organization of free, fair and credible elections. Some Council members³⁰⁷ objected to the draft resolution proposed by the Russian Federation on the basis that it did not provide a solution to the crisis and that it failed to include recognition of the humanitarian situation in the country. Several speakers³⁰⁸ expressed regret about the lack of unity in the Council regarding the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela affirmed that, if there were any threats to the peace in his country, they came from abroad, and demanding from the Council a clear statement condemning and prohibiting the use of military force against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.³⁰⁹

In a letter dated 28 February addressed to the President of the Council, the Permanent Representative of Colombia protested the President's decision "not to allow" him to take the floor during the meeting held on that date in order to respond to the claims

³⁰⁵ See [S/PV.8476](#).

³⁰⁶ Belgium, United Kingdom, Germany and France.

³⁰⁷ United Kingdom, Germany and Poland.

³⁰⁸ Peru, South Africa and Indonesia.

³⁰⁹ For more information on the discussion, see part II, sect. II.B.

directed against Colombia by the representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.³¹⁰

On 10 April, the Council held a meeting,³¹¹ attended by the Secretary-General and the Vice-President of the United States, at which it heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on the worsening humanitarian situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. During his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General affirmed that there was a very real humanitarian problem in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, noting the recurrent widespread power outages affecting the entire country, including hospitals, and the continued economic decline, rendering food even less affordable to its population. He outlined the priority humanitarian needs, estimating that 7 million people needed humanitarian assistance, and mentioned recent United Nations efforts to expand such assistance. He sought the collective support of the Council for greater respect for principled humanitarian action, affirming the need to distinguish between political and humanitarian objectives. The Under-Secretary-General requested the Council's support for an enabling operating environment, including sustained and regular access to people in need. Lastly, he asked for additional financial resources to support the expansion of humanitarian programmes.

Following the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General, the Council heard a briefing by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/International Organization for Migration Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region. The joint special representative informed the Council that an estimated 3.7 million Venezuelans had left the country, approximately 80 per cent of whom had done so since 2015, and projected that, by the end of

2019, that number could exceed 5 million. He called for more support for Member States that were employing open-door policies to receive, assist and host Venezuelan outflows, as well as for the host communities receiving Venezuelans in need of assistance. He also called for stronger international cooperation in the form of greater financial support. At the same meeting, a researcher from Johns Hopkins University presented findings from a report published jointly by Human Rights Watch and the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, in which it was concluded that the combination of severe shortages of medicine, health supplies and food in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, together with the spread of epidemics within and across the country's borders, had resulted in a breakdown of the country's health system. She noted that the situation in the country was a complex humanitarian emergency and recommended that the Secretary-General declare it as such and that it lead a full-scale United Nations-led response that was neutral, independent and impartial. She advised the Council to meet regularly to address both the humanitarian crisis and its regional impact. Following the briefings, Council members continued to express differing views on the situation in the country and on possible solutions to the crisis. The representative of Peru, emphasizing that the other members of the Lima Group, namely Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama and Paraguay, aligned themselves with his statement, asked the international community and the members of the Council to support them in their efforts to help to restore constitutional order in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The representative of the Dominican Republic noted that humanitarian assistance alone would not be enough to solve the crisis and that it was urgent to find the conditions to conduct concrete negotiations that would lead to a solution to the crisis, through a fair, free and competitive electoral process, and called for that to be a solution led by the Venezuelans themselves and achieved in a peaceful manner.

³¹⁰ [S/2019/197](#). For more information on participation in meetings of the Council, see part II, sect. VII.

³¹¹ [S/PV.8506](#).

Meetings: the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

<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.8452 26 January 2019			22 Member States ^a	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs	All Council members, ^b all invitees ^c	Procedural vote (rule 9) 9-4-2 ^d

**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.8472 26 February 2019			23 Member States ^e	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs	All Council members, all invitees ^f	
S/PV.8476 28 February 2019		Draft resolution submitted by United States (S/2019/186) Draft resolution submitted by Russian Federation (S/2019/190)	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)		12 Council members, ^g invitee	Draft resolution S/2019/186 not adopted 9-3-3 ^h Draft resolution S/2019/190 not adopted 4-7-4 ⁱ
S/PV.8506 10 April 2019			Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees/ International Organization for Migration Joint Special Representative for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in the region, researcher at Johns Hopkins University	All Council members, ^j all invitees ^{k, l}	

^a Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

^b The Dominican Republic (President of the Council) was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; the United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State for Europe and the Americas; and the United States was represented by its Secretary of State.

^c Colombia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Cuba was represented by its Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and Permanent Representative to the United Nations; Nicaragua was represented by its Minister Adviser to the President; and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was represented by its Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs.

^d *For*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, United States; *against*: China, Equatorial Guinea, Russian Federation, South Africa; *abstaining*: Côte d'Ivoire, Indonesia.

^e Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

^f The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela was represented by its Minister of the People's Power for Foreign Affairs. The representative of Suriname spoke also on behalf of Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago.

^g Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Indonesia, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States. Germany was represented by its State Secretary of the Federal Foreign Office.

^h *For*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, France, Germany, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, United States; *against*: China, Russian Federation, South Africa; *abstaining*: Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Indonesia.

ⁱ *For*: China, Equatorial Guinea, Russian Federation, South Africa; *against*: Belgium, France, Germany, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, United States; *abstaining*: Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Kuwait.

^j The United States was represented by its Vice-President.

^k The Joint Special Representative participated in the meeting by videoconference from Panama City.

^l The Secretary-General attended the meeting but did not brief the Council.

Asia

17. The situation in Afghanistan

During the period under review, the Council held seven meetings and adopted two resolutions concerning the situation in Afghanistan. The Council held three meetings in the form of briefings, two as debates and two were convened to adopt decisions of the Council.³¹² In 2019, the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) twice, the first time for 6 months, until 17 September 2019 and subsequently for 12 months, until 17 September 2020.³¹³ More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.

In 2019, as in previous periods, the Council heard quarterly briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA in connection with the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.³¹⁴ Two of those briefings were conducted during Council debates with the participation of interested Member States. In addition, the Council heard briefings by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1988 (2011), the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the Chairperson of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission and the Afghan youth representative to the United Nations. The Council also

heard briefings by two civil society representatives in two separate meetings.

In his briefings, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General discussed the developments in the peace process, the conduct of presidential elections, and the security and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

With respect to the peace process, the Special Representative emphasized that the best way to secure a sustainable peace agreement was an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process that allowed for the meaningful participation of all those affected by the conflict, including women, young people, victims and business and religious leaders.³¹⁵ He also said that it was imperative that the Taliban talk directly with the Government of Afghanistan and that the dialogues in Moscow needed to be directed towards the start of formal negotiations between the two parties.³¹⁶ He noted that peace in Afghanistan would have wide-ranging implications on both regional stability and international efforts to counter terrorist groups, including Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province, and would create opportunities for accelerated development and enhanced connectivity of the region.³¹⁷

On the presidential elections scheduled for 28 September 2019, the Special Representative reported on the preparations undertaken and the challenges faced by the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the United Nations and international partners, for the conduct of transparent, inclusive, credible and timely

³¹² For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

³¹³ Resolutions 2460 (2019), para. 4, and 2489 (2019), para. 4.

³¹⁴ S/2019/193, S/2019/493, S/2019/703 and S/2019/935.

³¹⁵ See S/PV.8481, S/PV.8555 and S/PV.8687.

³¹⁶ See S/PV.8481 and S/PV.8555.

³¹⁷ See S/PV.8687.