

importance of respecting the sovereignty and jurisdiction of Iraq over crimes committed on its territory and called on UNITAD to maintain its impartiality and discharge its duties in line with its mandate.⁹⁰¹

On 18 September, pursuant to a request by the Government of Iraq,⁹⁰² the Council unanimously

adopted resolution [2544 \(2020\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of the Special Adviser and UNITAD until 18 September 2021.⁹⁰³ By the same resolution, the Council also requested the Special Adviser to continue to submit and present reports to the Council on the team's activities every 180 days.⁹⁰⁴

⁹⁰¹ China, Russian Federation, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

⁹⁰² See [S/2020/909](#).

⁹⁰³ Resolution [2544 \(2020\)](#), para. 2.

⁹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 4. For more information, see part IX, sect. III.

Videoconferences: threats to international peace and security

<i>Videoconference data</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
15 June 2020	S/2020/547	Letter dated 17 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	
18 September 2020	S/2020/917	Letter dated 18 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	Resolution 2544 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/920
10 December 2020	S/2020/1193	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	

35. Maintenance of international peace and security

During the period under review, the Council held three meetings in connection with the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". One of the meetings took the form of a high-level open debate and two were convened to adopt decisions.⁹⁰⁵ The Council adopted four resolutions, one of them under Chapter VII of the Charter, and issued one presidential statement. More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held nine videoconferences in connection with the item. More information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below. In addition to meetings and videoconferences, Council members also held informal consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences in connection with the item.⁹⁰⁶

As in previous periods, a broad range of new and existing sub-items of both a thematic and a regional

nature were discussed in connection with the item.⁹⁰⁷ The thematic sub-items were: (a) Upholding the United Nations Charter; (b) Implications of COVID-19; (c) Youth and peace and security; (d) Climate and security; (e) Humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security; (f) Global governance after COVID-19; and (g) Security sector reform. The region-specific sub-items were: (a) Comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf region; and (b) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution [2491 \(2019\)](#) relating to the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya.

On 9 January, at the initiative of Viet Nam, which held the Presidency for the month,⁹⁰⁸ the Council held a high-level open debate⁹⁰⁹ marking the seventy-fifth

⁹⁰⁵ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II.

⁹⁰⁶ See [A/75/2](#), part II, chap. 35.

⁹⁰⁷ For more information on new sub-items, see part II, sect. III.A.

⁹⁰⁸ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 31 December 2019 ([S/2020/1](#)).

⁹⁰⁹ See [S/PV.8699](#).

anniversary of the United Nations on the subject “Upholding the United Nations Charter”. The meeting was resumed twice and was held over a period of three days, on 9, 10 and 13 January.⁹¹⁰ At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General and the Chair of the Elders.⁹¹¹

The Secretary-General noted that the New Year had begun with fresh turmoil and long-standing suffering. He mentioned that geopolitical tensions had reached dangerous levels, most recently in the Gulf. Against this backdrop, he emphasized that the Charter remained the shared framework of international cooperation for the common good, which also served as a reminder of the primacy of the rule of law and human dignity. He reminded Council members that the privilege of United Nations membership carried vital responsibilities to uphold the Charter’s tenets and values, particularly in preventing and addressing conflict.

The Chair of the Elders said that the world was facing two distinct existential threats, namely, nuclear proliferation and the climate crisis. Although responding to those threats was critical, it was harder to do at a time when multilateral cooperation was being undermined by populism and nationalism. Echoing the Secretary-General, she recalled that Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations required parties to any dispute that threatened international peace and security to negotiate or use other peaceful means to resolve their conflict. With reference to the tensions between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, she explained that dialogue and negotiations were urgently needed, and urged Member States participating in the meeting to consider what the United Nations could do to bring them to the table in the spirit of the Charter.

Following the briefings, Council Members and other participants reaffirmed the importance of multilateralism and the need to uphold and respect the purposes and principles of the Charter. The need for the Council to address emerging as well as new threats and the use of force in line with the Charter of the United Nations was also discussed during the meeting. Many speakers emphasized the primary responsibility of the Council for the maintenance of international peace and security and the need for States to make maximum use of the tools available to them under the Charter, especially in the areas of conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of international disputes,

including the role of regional organizations or agencies to address matters relating to the maintenance of international peace and security.⁹¹²

On 27 April, at the initiative of the Dominican Republic, which held the Presidency for the month,⁹¹³ Council members held a videoconference⁹¹⁴ in connection with the item, under the theme “Youth and peace and security” and specifically entitled “Towards the fifth anniversary of the youth and peace and security agenda: accelerating implementation of resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018)”. At the videoconference, the members of the Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth, the Project Coordinator for Youth without Borders Organization for Development, Yemen, and the Founder of the Young Adult Empowerment Initiative, South Sudan/Uganda. At the videoconference, the Secretary-General presented his first report on youth and peace and security⁹¹⁵ and noted that, since the issuance of the report, the COVID-19 pandemic had acutely affected young people from lost jobs to family stress, mental health and other hardships.⁹¹⁶ More than 1.54 billion children and youth were out of school. Young refugees, displaced persons and others caught up in conflict or disaster now faced even more vulnerability. He added that despite the challenges facing young people, they were still finding ways to engage, to support each other and to demand and drive change on issues such as the battle against COVID-19, supporting the call for a global ceasefire and the battle against climate change. He called on Member States to address those challenges by investing in young people’s participation, organizations and initiatives, including strengthening human rights protections and protecting the civic space on which youth participation depended.

The Envoy of the Secretary-General on Youth dedicated her statement to all the young people who were putting their communities ahead of themselves in war zones, refugee camps, favelas and settlements. Noting that 2020 marked the fifth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 2250 (2015), she considered it an opportune moment to take stock of the youth and peace and security agenda and its progress and successes, as well as address its challenges and gaps. She recommended regular and systematic reporting to

⁹¹⁰ This was owing to the financial difficulties faced by the United Nations, which resulted in meetings of the Council being restricted to take place only from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m.

⁹¹¹ See [S/PV.8699](#).

⁹¹² For more information on the discussion, see part III, sects. I and II, part V, sect. I, part VI, sect. IV, part VII, sect. I, and part VIII, sect. I.

⁹¹³ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 13 April 2020 ([S/2020/302](#)).

⁹¹⁴ See [S/2020/346](#).

⁹¹⁵ [S/2020/167](#).

⁹¹⁶ See [S/2020/346](#).

the Council on the implementation of resolutions [2250 \(2015\)](#) and [2419 \(2018\)](#), and to put young people at the heart of the Council's efforts to bring about global peace and security.

In their statements, Council members welcomed the Secretary-General's report and took note of his recommendations for the meaningful participation of young people in peace and security efforts. Many Member States emphasized the core challenges that could have a devastating impact on youth development, especially the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They called for inclusive, strategic actions and funding for programming and institutional support to further accelerate the youth and peace and security agenda.

On 2 July, at the initiative of Germany, which held the Presidency for the month,⁹¹⁷ the Council held a videoconference⁹¹⁸ under the sub-item entitled "Implications of COVID-19". At the videoconference, Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the African Union Commissioner of Social Affairs. The Secretary-General said that the COVID-19 pandemic was fast becoming a protection crisis, which continued profoundly to affect peace and security across the globe. He noted that the pandemic had made diplomacy more challenging. It had also highlighted the risks of bioterrorist attacks, showing some of the ways in which preparedness might fall short if a disease were to be deliberately manipulated to be more virulent or intentionally released in multiple places at once. He also expressed concern that the pandemic was triggering or exacerbating human rights challenges, noting that populists, nationalists and others who were already seeking to roll back human rights were finding in the pandemic a pretext for repressive measures unrelated to the disease.

The President of ICRC stated that ICRC was seeing first-hand how the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic aftershocks were deepening fragility, spiking humanitarian needs, accentuating the impact of violence and conflict, opening the doors to alarming levels of stigmatization, increasing global poverty, heightening instability and tensions and reversing hard-won development gains. He said that there were six essential lessons for a pandemic response in humanitarian settings, notably: (a) that international humanitarian law needed to be better respected; (b) that assistance and protection must be available to all those in need without the threat of politicization or

manipulation; (iii) that the response should go far beyond health needs and mitigate the wider secondary impacts of pandemics; (iv) that responses must reach the most vulnerable and marginalized community members; (v) that there must be action to proactively guard against any rollback of civilian protections; and (vi) that responses would be effective only if there was community trust and engagement.

Following the briefings, Council members discussed the security implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, including its impact on fragile societies and peace operations. Many speakers maintained that the Council had a primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security and should address the effects of the pandemic. They stressed the need for a greater role of the Council in addressing the crisis, while calling for global solidarity and cooperation towards a collective responsibility to protect civilians.⁹¹⁹

On 14 July, the Council held a meeting⁹²⁰ at which it unanimously adopted resolution [2535 \(2020\)](#). At the meeting, the representative of the Dominican Republic also spoke on behalf of France, who was a co-penholder of the draft, and noted that the resolution reflected the Council's recognition of and support for the pivotal role that young people played in the maintenance of peace and security. Citing the fifth anniversary of the adoption of the first resolution on youth and peace and security, as well as the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, he emphasized the need to listen to and work with young people who were the missing piece for peace and development. He called for the development of a guide dedicated to the protection of young people, including the appointment of focal points for youth and peace and security both within the United Nations system and in countries and regional organizations. The representative of the Niger noted that one in four young people were still affected by violence and conflict despite it being five years after the Council had recognized, for the first time, the specific situation of youth in armed conflict. He added that young people lacked educational and economic opportunities and their human rights were violated and curtailed, even more so during the global COVID-19 pandemic. It was therefore crucial that the Council not only recognize the specific situation of young people but also leverage their role in and potential for preventing conflicts, building peaceful and inclusive societies and effectively addressing humanitarian needs by strengthening the role of young peacebuilders,

⁹¹⁷ A concept note was circulated by letter dated 22 June 2020 ([S/2020/571](#)).

⁹¹⁸ See [S/2020/663](#).

⁹¹⁹ For more information on the discussion, see part V, sect. I and part VII, sect. I.

⁹²⁰ See [S/PV.8748](#).

engaging youth in humanitarian responses and inviting youth organizations to brief the Council.⁹²¹ The representative of the Russian Federation expressed his expectation that future discussions on youth issues should be comprehensive in nature. Regarding youth participation in peace processes, including peace settlements and peacebuilding, he stated that it was important to eliminate obstacles, including by introducing preventive measures with respect to the spread of extremist ideologies and terrorism among young people.

On 24 July, at the initiative of Germany,⁹²² Council members held a videoconference⁹²³ on the theme “Climate and security” at which they were briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Europe, Central Asia and the Americas, the Director of the Centre national d’études stratégiques et de sécurité of the Niger and the Director of Sustainable Pacific Consultancy of Niue. The Assistant Secretary-General stated that the climate emergency was a danger to peace. Although there was no automatic link between climate change and conflict, he noted that climate change did exacerbate existing risks and created new one, and that the consequences varied from region to region. To cope with climate change, he stressed the need to leverage new technologies and enhance the analytical capacity to translate long-term climate foresight into actionable, near-term analysis, as well as to strengthen multidimensional partnerships. In his statement, the Director of the Centre national d’études stratégiques et de sécurité addressed the extent to which climate change was affecting the livelihoods of citizens in the Sahel. He examined the broader consequences of climate change on regional security, while highlighting the role of the Niger in alleviating climate change. He proposed that the United Nations should conduct an integrated climate security assessment before assisting countries, including assisting in building national-to-local capabilities to monitor and manage climate change effects, as well as task United Nations country teams that were in contact with relevant government bodies to collect authoritative information on the impact of climate-related security risks in conflict settings and make those results available to the Member States. The Director of Sustainable Pacific Consultancy highlighted the effects of climate change on the Pacific

small-island developing States. She called on the Council to continue to build on and integrate the best available science, modelling and risk assessments into its work and to coordinate with the many existing efforts already under way across the development, climate change and humanitarian bodies of practice.

Many Council members and other Member States emphasized that the Council must work within its mandate to address the impact of climate change on the situations on its agenda, including through regular reporting, while other speakers cautioned against it. Several speakers⁹²⁴ also called for the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Climate and Security.⁹²⁵

On 9 September, at the initiative of the Niger, which held the Presidency for the month, Council members held a videoconference⁹²⁶ at which they were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. In her briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs highlighted three heightened risks, namely, the erosion of trust in public institutions, the aggravation of certain human rights challenges during the pandemic and the risk to political and peace processes. She also acknowledged that contrary to expectations, a significant change in the dynamics of a number of ongoing armed conflicts as a result of COVID-19 had not been observed. She also provided an update on the status of the Secretary-General’s call on 23 March 2020 for a global ceasefire, noting that the initial response had been encouraging with a number of temporary truces announced, but that many had expired without extension resulting in little improvement on the ground. Special representatives, envoys and mediators had stepped up efforts to advance political and peace discussions in a number of regions and had addressed how operations had been adapted in the midst of the pandemic. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations provided an update on the measures taken to address the enormous challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic to peacekeeping operations and to the countries where they were deployed. He stated that with the unified and consistent backing of the Council, peacekeeping operations had quickly and effectively put in place a range of measures that had ensured operational

⁹²¹ The representative of the Niger delivered his statement on behalf of Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

⁹²² The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 18 July (S/2020/725).

⁹²³ See S/2020/751.

⁹²⁴ Germany, Estonia, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Ireland, Fiji, Nauru, Spain and Tuvalu.

⁹²⁵ For further details on the discussion, see part V, sect. I.

⁹²⁶ See S/2020/897.

continuity and ongoing mandate implementation across all operations. The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator said that there were growing reasons to believe that in the medium and longer term the weakest, most fragile and conflict-affected countries would be those worst affected by COVID-19. He pointed out that beyond the economy, the biggest indirect effect of the virus was on public services, especially health and education, and warned that inadequate economic and political action from the international community could lead to greater instability and conflicts in the coming years and result in more crises on the agenda of the Council. He also addressed the launch of the United Nations-coordinated Global Humanitarian Response Plan for COVID-19 in March 2020 by the Secretary-General, describing how it had been used to combat the pandemic.

Council members commended the peacekeepers and humanitarian workers who were assisting in the implementation of the COVID-19 response plans. They emphasized the need for continued support for peacekeeping operations so as to strengthen their medical capacities and ensure the safety, security and health of peacekeepers and to enable them to fully implement their mandates despite the pandemic. Many speakers referred to resolution 2532 (2020) as a step in the right direction in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on international peace and security and urged all relevant parties to respect the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire.

On 17 September, at the initiative of the Niger,⁹²⁷ Council members held a videoconference⁹²⁸ in connection with the item, under the sub-item entitled “Humanitarian effects of environmental degradation and peace and security”, during which they were briefed by the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, in Particular in Africa, and Ms. Inna Modja, Land Ambassador and environmental activist. The President of ICRC called for more in-depth policy reflections on the links between environmental degradation, climate risk, humanitarian needs and peace and security. He cited climate shocks as a key issue of concern, alongside poverty and injustice for people affected by conflict, and explained the twofold focus of ICRC to mitigate

the impacts of conflict and protect communities from harm and to respect international humanitarian law to enhance the protection of the environment. He noted that the cumulative pressures of conflict, climate change and environmental degradation could affect the survival of communities living in the Sahel and the Lake Chad region. He affirmed that peace and security would not be established by focusing on military and security measures to curb conflict and violence. Acknowledging that many would agree in general terms on the linkages between peace, security and the climate and the environment, he noted that the “how” of the response still needed more critical analysis and sharing of experiences, adding that ICRC would welcome regular and systematic discussions on the issue. The Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification stated that an assessment of the root causes of conflicts showed that a large proportion had a link to the environment, which might either be due to the abundance of natural resources such as oil, minerals or wildlife, or to scarcity of land, water or vegetation. He cautioned that to prevent conflicts while protecting the planet, the international community ought to first tackle the effects of environment degradation. Ms. Modja emphasized the urgency to find solutions to the consequences of desertification and climate change and the impact that they could have on security and peace.

Following the briefings, speakers addressed a variety of themes, including the effects of the destruction of the natural environment in armed conflict, the humanitarian consequences of climate change and land degradation and how to better adapt and implement the climate mechanisms, international law and policies to contribute to the protection of the environment and natural resources in order to prevent armed conflict. Many speakers called on the Council to act in an integrated and coherent approach in addressing these multidimensional challenges.⁹²⁹

On 24 September, again at the initiative of the Niger,⁹³⁰ Council members held a videoconference⁹³¹ under the sub-item entitled “Global governance after COVID-19”, at which they heard briefings by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. Noting that the COVID-19 pandemic was a full-blown crisis unfolding against a backdrop of high geopolitical tensions, the Secretary-General said that the pandemic was a clear test of

⁹²⁷ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 1 September 2020 (S/2020/882).

⁹²⁸ See S/2020/929.

⁹²⁹ For further details on the discussion, see part VIII, sect. I.

⁹³⁰ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 1 September 2020 (S/2020/883).

⁹³¹ See S/2020/953.

international cooperation that the international community had failed owing to a lack of global preparedness, cooperation, unity and solidarity. As the United Nations marked its seventy-fifth anniversary in 2020, the Secretary-General emphasized the need for innovative thinking on global governance and multilateralism fit for the twenty-first century. He added that the General Assembly declaration on the commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary had created space for a process of reflection on the future of multilateral cooperation and the post-COVID world. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission stressed the need for effective global governance and called on all States to recommit to a collaborative approach to the pandemic response, while highlighting the initiatives of the African Union in addressing the crisis including the establishment of an African special fund for the COVID-19 response.

Following the briefings, Council members discussed the need for global governance reform to strengthen convergence towards sustainable global peace and security, especially during the pandemic. Several speakers highlighted the challenges faced with regard to the World Health Organization (WHO) while calling for its strengthening to adequately respond to the global pandemic. The representative of the United States stated that the decision of its Government to withdraw from WHO was due to its lack of independence, transparency and accountability. Most speakers expressed their support for the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire amid the pandemic.

On 20 October, at the initiative of the Russian Federation,⁹³² which held the Presidency for the month, Council members held a videoconference⁹³³ under the sub-item entitled "Comprehensive review of the situation in the Persian Gulf region". Council members heard briefings from the Secretary-General, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group and the President of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences. The Secretary-General stated that given the complex and multifaceted challenges in the Persian Gulf region, it was important to reflect more deeply on how the international community, particularly the Council, could work in unison to promote peace and security in that vital part of the world. Referring to the situation in Yemen, he expressed concern that nearly six years of war had devastated the lives of millions of Yemenites and had undermined confidence-building

efforts in the region. He reiterated his appeal for an immediate global ceasefire to focus on the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic. Concerning regional stability, the Secretary-General stated that the issue of nuclear non-proliferation was critical, while expressing his support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action as an important instrument against nuclear proliferation. As the United Nations marked its seventy-fifth anniversary, the Secretary-General noted that the Organization would continue its work to help to reduce tensions in the Persian Gulf region. The President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Crisis Group cautioned that conditions for a war that would affect not just the Gulf but the broader Middle East were arguably riper than at any time in recent memory and could break out in any number of places. He noted that the aspirations of the people of the Middle East for decent and peaceful lives had been stymied by rivalries and lack of cooperation among their Governments. In his remarks, he addressed some of the causes and the possible remedies. Noting the absence of any institutional mechanism for parties to air their grievances, he affirmed that the Gulf region needed to initiate a collective and inclusive security dialogue encompassing the six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, aiming at diminishing tensions. The United Nations, too, could play an important role. Resolution 598 (1987), which ended the Iran-Iraq war, provided a mandate for the Secretary-General to convene a regional security dialogue to lay the groundwork for a security architecture tolerable to all sides. He added that the main threat faced with regard to the region was not so much a war of choice but an inadvertent one resulting from miscalculation, misinterpretation or lack of timely communication.

In his statement, the President of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences stated that owing to the tremendous geoeconomic and geostrategic significance and openness of the Gulf subregion, tensions were increasing, which was seriously threatening security and political and economic stability in the subregion. He expressed support for collective, solidarity-based efforts free of confrontational approaches and demonization. It was that approach which was laid down in the concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf proposed by the Russian Federation in 2019, the implementation of which would allow the normalization of the situation in the subregion. In that regard, he recalled that in August, the President of the Russian Federation had put forward a proposal to convene a summit of the five permanent members of the Security Council, with the

⁹³² The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 14 October 2020 (S/2020/1013).

⁹³³ See S/2020/1037.

participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Germany, to agree on the parameters of joint efforts aimed at the creation of reliable mechanisms for ensuring security and strengthening confidence-building measures in the Persian Gulf zone. He also mentioned that the issue of confidence-building measures and transparency was key to the initial stage of the process of a rapprochement among the parties.

Following the briefings, Council members discussed the challenges in the Persian Gulf region, while urging the Council to support regional initiatives. They emphasized the urgent need for peaceful solutions to the crises in Yemen, the Syrian Arab Republic and other parts of the Gulf region. The need for a unified approach and multilateral diplomacy to enhance efforts towards building trust and confidence throughout the region was stressed by Member States. Some participants endorsed the development of a regional security architecture in collaboration with the United Nations and international partners to address the security concerns of all stakeholders,⁹³⁴ while the representative of the United States noted that the international community did not need yet another mechanism to promote Gulf security.⁹³⁵

On 3 December, at the initiative of South Africa, which held the Presidency for the month,⁹³⁶ Council members held a videoconference⁹³⁷ under the sub-item entitled “Security sector reform”. Council members were briefed by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions and the Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union. In her briefing, the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa acknowledged that there was a broad recognition that security sector governance was a key element of United Nations support to national efforts to sustain peace and prevent the outbreak, escalation, continuation and recurrence of conflict across the entire peace continuum. Expectations, however, needed to be realistic. She pointed out that security sector governance and reform was a complex and long-term endeavour, sometimes spanning a generation and requiring a deep understanding of the root causes of a conflict, sustained political will to overcome resistance and the space to implement difficult political decisions. In her statement she put forth three recommendations to the Council and Member States to optimally position

the United Nations in advancing nationally owned and led security sector governance and reform efforts by, first, recognizing security sector governance and reform primarily as political processes and ensuring that peace operation mandates on security sector reform were linked to broader political objectives; secondly, systematically recognizing the coordination role of the United Nations and the necessity of partnerships as means to align international assistance with national security sector priorities; and thirdly, supporting inclusive security sector reform processes and prioritizing efforts aiming at increasing women’s participation in national security services by identifying and addressing systemic barriers to their recruitment, retention and promotion.

The Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions elaborated on the role of the United Nations in assisting national authorities in building an effective and accountable security sector. He noted, however, that challenges persisted. United Nations regional offices and special envoys lacked reliable security sector reform capacity, particularly in the context of implementing the Secretary-General’s conflict-prevention agenda. The mismatch between financial needs and the resources availed and committed to by donors was a major concern in many countries. Ensuring an effective division of labour and fostering the strategic coherence of international assistance, including in the context of implementing political agreements, continued to be a challenge.

The Commissioner for Peace and Security of the African Union briefed on the initiatives of the African Union in assisting member States to address the challenges in security sector governance and reform. According to him, the African Union master road map of practical steps to silence the guns in Africa by 2020 acknowledged that the failure to transform African defence and security forces into professional and disciplined national security institutions subjected to civilian oversight and control had often led to the eruption of or relapse into conflicts, thus perpetuating cycles of violence and disrupting stabilization and peacebuilding efforts. He noted that since the adoption of its security sector reform policy framework in 2013, the African Union had continued to deploy efforts to assist member States in addressing the challenges of security sector governance and reform. He also underlined that the African Union was mindful that the governance of the security sector was a sine qua non for peacebuilding and sustaining peace. However, it was politically complex, long-term and often costly and therefore required full engagement by State and

⁹³⁴ Viet Nam, Belgium and France.

⁹³⁵ For more information on the discussion, see part III, sect. II, part VI, sect. IV, and part VIII, sect. I.

⁹³⁶ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 25 November 2020 (S/2020/1145).

⁹³⁷ See S/2020/1176.

non-State stakeholders, with strong national ownership guided by high-level political leadership.

Following the briefings, Council members highlighted their countries' initiatives in the implementation of security sector governance reform. Speakers discussed the linkages between security sector governance and reform and peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including the importance of providing resources and sustainable funding for activities related to security sector reform initiatives. Participants also stressed the role played by the United Nations in improving the effectiveness of peace operations and the strengthening of security sector governance and nationally led reform. Many speakers called for inclusive security sector reform processes and prioritization efforts aimed at increasing women's participation in the security services. The representative of South Africa stated that her country had undertaken to update resolution 2151 (2014) to make it more relevant, taking into account the evolving situation regarding the realization of the objectives of security sector governance and reform. The adoption of resolution 2553 (2020) was announced at the same videoconference. In explaining his delegation's vote on the resolution, the representative of the United Kingdom indicated that his delegation welcomed the intent of the penholder to update resolution 2151 (2014) to reflect progress in the development of normative and operational frameworks on security sector reform. However, while sufficiently content to vote in favour of resolution 2553 (2020), due to the importance of its subject matter, he highlighted some concerns which had led his delegation to qualify the United Kingdom's support. First, he noted that the process of penholding ahead of the resolution's tabling fell far short of the expectations and standards of Council practice. Secondly, he said that for security sector reform to be successful and sustainable, it had to be inclusive and participatory. In that regard, he made clear that the United Kingdom would continue to interpret the content of the resolution as meaning that international security sector reform efforts should be delivered in full accordance with the principles of women's empowerment and gender equality set out in resolution 1325 (2000) and all other relevant resolutions on women and peace and security.

In 2020, the Council adopted four resolutions and issued one presidential statement in connection with the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". The decisions of the Council addressed some of the themes outlined above. In a presidential statement issued on 9 January,⁹³⁸ on the occasion of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations, the

⁹³⁸ S/PRST/2020/1.

Council reaffirmed its commitment to the Charter of the United Nations, including its purposes and principles, and called on Member States to fully comply with the Charter through mainstreaming the purposes and principles of the Charter into policymaking and implementation mechanisms.⁹³⁹ The Council stressed the need for enhanced inclusive dialogue in the interest of all Member States to share different experiences, national best practices and lessons learned in implementing their obligations under the Charter.⁹⁴⁰ The Council also reaffirmed its commitment to multilateralism and the central role of the United Nations.⁹⁴¹ While recognizing the positive contribution of the United Nations over 75 years to upholding the Charter, the Council underscored the importance of the widest possible dissemination of in-depth knowledge of the Charter and encouraged the Secretary-General and relevant United Nations agencies to incorporate activities to promote the role of the Charter in their programmes to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.⁹⁴² The Council further underlined the importance of the role of regional and subregional organizations and arrangements and of cooperation with them, consistent with Chapter VIII of the Charter.⁹⁴³

On 1 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2532 (2020), in which it recognized the efforts and measures proposed by the Secretary-General concerning the response to the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in conflict-affected countries, in particular his appeal for an immediate global ceasefire.⁹⁴⁴ The Council demanded a general and immediate cessation of hostilities in all situations on its agenda and called upon all parties to armed conflicts to engage immediately in a durable humanitarian pause for at least 90 consecutive days, in order to enable the safe, unhindered and sustained delivery of humanitarian assistance, provision of related services by impartial humanitarian actors, in accordance with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and medical evacuations, in accordance with international law, including international humanitarian law and refugee law as applicable.⁹⁴⁵ The Council requested the Secretary-General: (a) to help ensure that all relevant parts of the United Nations system, including United Nations country teams, in accordance

⁹³⁹ Ibid., first and fourth paragraphs.

⁹⁴⁰ Ibid., fourth paragraph.

⁹⁴¹ Ibid., first paragraph.

⁹⁴² Ibid., fifth paragraph.

⁹⁴³ Ibid., sixth paragraph.

⁹⁴⁴ Resolution 2532 (2020), eighth preambular paragraph.

⁹⁴⁵ Ibid., paras. 1 and 2.

with their respective mandates, accelerated their response to the COVID-19 pandemic; (b) to provide updates to the Council on the United Nations efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic in countries in situations of armed conflict or affected by humanitarian crises, as well as on the impact of COVID-19 on the ability of peacekeeping operations and special political missions to deliver their mandated priority tasks; and (c) to instruct peacekeeping operations to provide support, within their mandates and capacities, to host country authorities in their efforts to contain the pandemic, in particular to facilitate humanitarian access, including to internally displaced persons and refugee camps, and allow for medical evacuations. The Council further requested the Secretary-General and Member States to take all appropriate steps to protect the safety, security and health of all personnel in United Nations peace operations, while maintaining the continuity of operations, and to take further steps towards the provision of training for peacekeeping personnel on issues related to preventing the spread of COVID-19.⁹⁴⁶

On 14 July, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2535 \(2020\)](#), taking note of the first report of the Secretary-General on youth and peace and security.⁹⁴⁷ By the resolution, the Council called on all relevant actors to consider ways to increase the inclusive representation of youth for the prevention and resolution of conflict, as well as in peacebuilding, and urged Member States to protect youth from violence in armed conflict and further urged Member States to facilitate an inclusive, safe, enabling and gender-responsive environment in which youth actors were recognized and provided with adequate support and protection to implement violence prevention activities and support social cohesion.⁹⁴⁸ The Council also stressed the importance of providing opportunities for young people to strengthen resilience against radicalization to violence and terrorist recruitment and of creating policies for youth that would positively contribute to peacebuilding efforts.⁹⁴⁹ The Council requested the Secretary-General and his special envoys to include the views of youth in relevant discussions pertinent to the maintenance of peace and security, peacebuilding and sustaining peace, and to facilitate the full, effective and meaningful participation of youth at all decision-making levels. The Council requested the Secretary-General to provide guidance for all peacekeeping and other relevant United Nations missions on the implementation of the youth and peace and security agenda and to develop dedicated

guidance on the protection of young people. The Secretary-General was also requested to include information and related recommendations on issues of relevance to young people in the context of armed conflict and to submit a biennial report to the Council on the implementation of the resolution and of resolutions [2250 \(2015\)](#) and [2419 \(2018\)](#).⁹⁵⁰

On 2 October, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2546 \(2020\)](#), by which it renewed the authorizations regarding acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking in Libya's territorial sea as set out in paragraphs 7, 8, 9 and 10 of resolution [2240 \(2015\)](#), for a further period of 12 months.⁹⁵¹ It further renewed the reporting requests set out in paragraph 17 of its resolution [2240 \(2015\)](#) and requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council 11 months after the adoption of the resolution on its implementation, in particular with regard to the implementation of paragraphs 7 to 10 of its resolution [2240 \(2015\)](#).⁹⁵²

On 3 December, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2553 \(2020\)](#), by which it reaffirmed the importance of security sector reform in peacebuilding and sustaining peace, including conflict prevention and in the stabilization and reconstruction of States in the aftermath of conflict.⁹⁵³ The Council also stressed the importance of the relevant bodies of the United Nations undertaking mission planning processes for security sector reform and underlined that the management of a transition from a peacekeeping operation or special political mission in relation to its security sector reform activities should be based upon a timely analysis, in consultation with the host country and in close coordination with the United Nations country team.⁹⁵⁴ The Council resolved to continue to promote the role of the United Nations Secretariat in supporting security sector reform and requested the Secretary-General to consider undertaking a number of tasks in the context of relevant country-specific mandates, including strengthening the comprehensive, integrated and coherent approach of the United Nations in security sector reform.⁹⁵⁵ In that regard, the Council requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report on his efforts to strengthen the United Nations comprehensive approach to security sector reform in September 2021.⁹⁵⁶

⁹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, paras. 20–22, 24 and 26.

⁹⁵¹ Resolution [2546 \(2020\)](#), para. 2. For more information on the situation in Libya, see part I, sect. 11. For more information on the authorization, see part VII, sect. IV.

⁹⁵² Resolution [2546 \(2020\)](#), para. 3.

⁹⁵³ Resolution [2553 \(2020\)](#), para. 1.

⁹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, paras. 12 and 14.

⁹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 20.

⁹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 25.

⁹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, paras. 4, 5 and 6.

⁹⁴⁷ [S/2020/167](#).

⁹⁴⁸ Resolution [2535 \(2020\)](#), paras. 1, 4 and 5.

⁹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, paras. 7 and 8.

Table 1
Meetings: 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.8699 9 January 2020	Upholding the United Nations Charter		94 Member States ^a	Chair of the Elders, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/1)	All Council members, ^b 92 Member States, ^{c,d} all other invitees	S/PRST/2020/1
S/PV.8699 (Resumption 1) 10 January 2020 and S/PV.8699 (Resumption 2) 13 January 2020	Letter dated 31 December 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/1)					
S/PV.8748 14 July 2020		Draft resolution submitted by 84 Member States ^e (S/2020/680)	70 Member States ^f		Dominican Republic, ^g Niger, Russian Federation	Resolution 2535 (2020) 15-0-0
S/PV.8763 2 October 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) (S/2020/876)	Draft resolution submitted by 27 Member States ^h (S/2020/957)	23 Member States ⁱ			Resolution 2546 (2020) 15-0-0 (adopted under Chapter VII)

^a Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Nepal, Netherlands, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Yemen.

^b Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was represented by its Prime Minister. Estonia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Germany was represented by its Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office; and Viet Nam was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.

^c Haiti was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship; Hungary was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade; Kenya was represented by the Diplomatic and Political Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Nicaragua was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Thailand was represented by the Special Envoy of the Minister for Foreign Affairs; Timor-Leste was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation; and Ukraine was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

- ^d Azerbaijan spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; Norway spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries; the Philippines spoke on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations; Ukraine also spoke on behalf of Canada, Germany and Sweden; and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine.
- ^e Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay and Viet Nam.
- ^f Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Botswana, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Montenegro, Morocco, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Uruguay.
- ^g The representative of the Dominican Republic also spoke on behalf of France. The representative of the Niger also spoke on behalf of Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom and Viet Nam.
- ^h Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.
- ⁱ Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.

Table 2
Videoconferences: maintenance of international peace and security

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
27 April 2020	S/2020/346	Letter dated 29 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
1 July 2020	S/2020/632	Letter dated 1 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	Resolution 2532 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/638
2 July 2020	S/2020/663	Letter dated 8 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	
24 July 2020	S/2020/751	Letter dated 28 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	
9 September 2020	S/2020/897	Letter dated 11 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	
17 September 2020	S/2020/929	Letter dated 21 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	

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
24 September 2020	S/2020/953	Letter dated 28 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	
20 October 2020	S/2020/1037	Letter dated 22 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
3 December 2020	S/2020/1176	Letter dated 8 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	Resolution 2553 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/1167

36. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting in connection with the item entitled “Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security”, which took the form of a briefing.⁹⁵⁷ Council members also held three open videoconferences in connection with the item.⁹⁵⁸ More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is given in table 1 below. Additional information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below. The Council also issued two presidential statements in connection with the item.

On 30 January, at the initiative of Viet Nam, which held the Presidency for the month,⁹⁵⁹ the Council held a meeting⁹⁶⁰ focused on cooperation between the United Nations and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General and the Secretary-General of the ASEAN Council. In his remarks, the Secretary-General noted that since the formalization of the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the United Nations in 2011, the two organizations were today focusing on

how to strengthen their cooperation in addressing threats to peace and security. Looking ahead, he said that there were multiple potential areas of practical cooperation between ASEAN and the United Nations in the areas of peace and security. In that regard, he highlighted the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations on peacekeeping, implementing the women and peace and security agenda and the youth and peace and security agenda, human rights, and counter-terrorism and preventing violent extremism, as well as on addressing cross-border security threats and transnational organized crime and exploring early warning arrangements and threat analysis. With regard to the climate crisis and natural disaster management, he suggested strengthening the ties with ASEAN nations to strengthen adaptation and build resilience to disasters and to forge strategic synergies, collaborations and paths forward for future work. In his intervention, the Secretary-General of ASEAN touched upon two matters, namely the contributions of ASEAN to peace, security and prosperity, and its relations with its external partners, including the United Nations. On the former, he spoke about a number of areas, such as the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia, by which ASEAN member States committed to maintaining peaceful relationships with one another, guided by the principles of mutual respect, non-interference in each other’s internal affairs and the peaceful settlement of disputes. He also highlighted the unique contribution of ASEAN to nurturing a conducive environment for peace and stability, including its ability to initiate and be the

⁹⁵⁷ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II.

⁹⁵⁸ For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁹⁵⁹ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 9 January 2020 ([S/2020/30](#)).

⁹⁶⁰ See [S/PV.8711](#).