



Security Council

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Letter dated 26 July 2021 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of China in May 2021 (see annex).

The document was prepared by the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations, following consultations with other members of the Security Council.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) **Dai Bing**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.
Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 26 July 2021 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of China (May 2021)

Introduction

During the month of May 2021, the Security Council held 20 public video conferences, 11 closed virtual consultations and four in-person meetings in the Council Chamber. It adopted four resolutions, agreed on two presidential statements and gave six statements to the press. Two press elements were issued by the presidency. The Council also adopted by consensus, in person, the annual report of the Security Council for 2020 (A/75/2), the introduction to which was drafted by the Niger. The Council discussed wide-ranging issues, including Africa and the Middle East, and a number of thematic issues, including the maintenance of international peace and security, peace and security in Africa, and United Nations peacekeeping operations. The signature events of the presidency included a high-level briefing on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: upholding multilateralism and the United Nations-centred international system", a high-level open debate on the theme "Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa", and an open debate on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers".

In accordance with United Nations practice, China began its presidency with the presentation of the provisional programme of work of the Council for the month, which was adopted at the Council's closed consultations on 3 May. On 3 May, the President of the Council gave briefings to the press and to all States Members of the United Nations on the work of the Council in May. On 28 May, the President of the Council held an in-person wrap-up session for all States Members of the United Nations on the activities of the Council in May, with the Permanent Representatives of Kenya and Norway to the United Nations invited as briefers.

Thematic and other issues

Maintenance of international peace and security

On 7 May, the Council held a high-level briefing via videoconference on the theme "Maintenance of international peace and security: upholding multilateralism and the United Nations-centred international system". The State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi, chaired the meeting. The Council was briefed by the President of the General Assembly, Volkan Bozkır, at its seventy-fifth session. Ministerial representatives of all Council members attended the meeting and delivered remarks.

In his statement, the President of the General Assembly emphasized that strong and effective multilateralism, based on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international law and justice, were the foundations for security, stability, peace and prosperity.

In the ensuing debate, representatives reaffirmed their commitment to multilateralism, the purposes and principles of the Charter, and international law. It was emphasized that, faced with multifaceted global challenges, the international

community should strengthen multilateral cooperation, uphold the Charter and strengthen the United Nations.

Peace and security in Africa

On 19 May, the Council held a high-level open debate on the theme “Peace and security in Africa: addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa”. The State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi, chaired the meeting. The Council was briefed by the Secretary-General, António Guterres, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Achim Steiner. Foreign ministers and senior officials of Council members attended the debate and delivered remarks.

In his statement, the Secretary-General indicated that recovery from the pandemic offered an opportunity to address the root causes of conflict, prioritizing prevention and the implementation of both the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the African Union’s Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want. He also stressed that equitable and sustainable vaccine roll-out worldwide was the quickest path towards a fast and fair recovery. The Administrator of UNDP, while noting that African countries accounted for a small fraction of the world’s reported coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases and deaths relative to their population, stated that those numbers nevertheless masked the crippling financial, social and political effects of the virus on the continent. From its many projects and studies on the ground, he stated that UNDP had learned that when addressing the root causes of conflict, investing in development worked. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission stressed that the pandemic would continue to have a profound impact on the continent’s economic and social development and that the biggest challenge Africans faced today was that of vaccine accessibility. Among other things, he stressed the need for urgent coordination on vaccine distribution and debt relief that accounted for the unique circumstances of African countries.

In the ensuing debate, representatives welcomed ongoing international and regional initiatives aimed at supporting Africa in recovering from the pandemic, called for increased mobilization, stressing the primary importance of ensuring equitable and affordable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all, and highlighted the necessity of a strong partnership between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the African Union. During the debate, China and African members of the Security Council jointly launched the Initiative on Partnership for Africa’s Development.

At the meeting, the Council adopted a presidential statement ([S/PRST/2021/10](#)) under the initiative of China, in which the Council, inter alia, called for greater national, regional and international cooperation and solidarity, stressed the need for greater support to African countries in strengthening their health systems, emphasized the importance of addressing the root causes of conflicts in Africa in a comprehensive and integrated approach and invited the accelerated donation of safe, effective vaccine doses to African countries in need.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

On 24 May, the Council held an open debate via videoconference on the theme “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers”. The Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, in his capacity as President of the Council, chaired the meeting. The meeting was

briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, Atul Khare, and the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, Gilles Michaud.

The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations stated that peacekeepers continued to operate in challenging environments and faced increasing attacks. Since 1 January 2021, 15 peacekeepers had been killed by malicious acts. Additional challenges, such as illness and vehicle accidents, also significantly affected the safety of peacekeepers and had been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated that safety and security should remain a top priority. The Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support pointed out that camp security and early warning technologies were readily available to peacekeeping missions and helped to save lives by alerting personnel about mortar and rocket attacks. Such measures also helped to pinpoint the origin of an attack and to assist with the allocation of patrol and defence resources. He also briefed the Council on the COVID-19 response regarding peacekeepers. The Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security stated that traditional and non-traditional security factors posed serious threats to the entire United Nations family. Stating that the global security landscape was unlikely to improve in a generation as economic, social and political root causes of conflicts persisted, he added that the international community therefore had an urgent and collective responsibility to improve the security of United Nations personnel.

The Council members expressed their gratitude to the peacekeepers for risking their lives under the United Nations flag around the world, especially those who had paid the ultimate sacrifice. They voiced concern about the emerging threats facing the Blue Helmets, including improvised explosive devices, targeted and asymmetrical attacks by armed groups and the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many speakers underscored the importance of peacekeeping as one of the most effective tools of the United Nations.

The meeting adopted a presidential statement ([S/PRST/2021/11](#)) on that theme under the initiative of China. The statement was based on Security Council resolution [2518 \(2020\)](#) and focused on mitigating the threat of improvised explosive devices, the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on peacekeeping operations and the vaccination roll-out to peacekeepers, among other issues. It also requested the Secretary-General to include the safety and security of peacekeepers in his reports to the Council on individual peacekeeping operations.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

On 25 May, the Council held an open debate via videoconference on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, based on the report of the Secretary-General ([S/2021/423](#)). The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Mark Lowcock, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer, and the Director of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit, Orzala Nemat, briefed the Council. Statements from 40 non-members of the Council and one regional organization were submitted in writing.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs introduced the report of the Secretary General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, which covered the state of the protection of civilians agenda as a whole and the implementation of resolution [2286 \(2016\)](#) on the protection of medical care. He focused on five areas of the protection of civilians agenda, including the interplay between conflict and hunger, the effects of using explosive weapons in populated areas, the protection of the environment, the protection of medical care and the strengthening of compliance with international humanitarian law and accountability for serious violations. The

President of the International Committee of the Red Cross urged Member States to strengthen the protection of civilians, calling for respect for international law and full implementation of resolution [2286 \(2016\)](#). He called on the international community to build on the good practices emerging from the pandemic to address the individual and systemic drivers of vulnerability. The Director of the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit presented the status quo of the protection of civilians in Afghanistan, stating that Afghanistan was one of the worst countries for civilians and health workers. She asked for practical mechanisms to stop the targeting of civilians during conflict and called for stronger pressure on the Taliban and the rest of political elites in Afghanistan to reach a ceasefire and political settlement.

Council members expressed their views on the priorities in the protection of civilians agenda. They highlighted the importance of improving compliance with international humanitarian law to protect civilians and civilian objects, accountability, including for attacks on health care, resolving root causes of conflicts and advancing political settlements to prevent and end conflict.

Dialogue with candidate for the position of Secretary-General

Members of the Security Council held an informal dialogue on 18 May 2021 with António Guterres as a candidate, presented by Portugal, for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations for the 2022–2026 mandate. This was the first such dialogue of the Council on the issue within the 2020/21 process. During the dialogue, Mr. Guterres presented his vision statement on challenges and opportunities facing the United Nations before Council members asked questions. Members of the Council found the dialogue meaningful and productive. The Council expressed its belief that the position of the Secretary-General was one of great importance. The Council conducted the process of selecting the Secretary-General in accordance with the provisions of Article 97 of the Charter and the 5 February joint letter from the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council and was guided by the principles of transparency and inclusivity. Following the dialogue, the Council planned to make its recommendation to the General Assembly in a timely manner.

During the dialogue, members of the Council agreed on press elements containing the above information. The President of the Council, Zhang Jun, delivered the elements to the press.

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#)

On 27 May, the Security Council held consultations via videoconference to discuss the 90-day report of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 (g) of the resolution. The Chair briefed the Council on the activities of the Committee for the period from 26 February to 27 May 2021.

Africa

Sahel

On 18 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference, followed by a consultation via videoconference on the Group of Five for the Sahel (G5 Sahel). During the briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the

Commander of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, Brigadier General Oumarou Namata Gazama, and the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, Mohamed Fathi Ahmed Edree, in his capacity as Chair of Peacebuilding Commission, briefed the Council. The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Chadians Abroad of Chad, Oumar ibn Daoud, delivered a statement to Council members.

In his statement, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations emphasized that the Joint Force remained a vital part of the security response to extremist armed groups in the region. The responsive operational and logistic support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to the Joint Force remained critical to the Force's operations. The assessment of MINUSMA support to the Joint Force carried out by the United Nations Secretariat highlighted the progress made in that regard, as well as challenges in implementing the enhanced support mandate, and the issue of the predictability of funding, which remained a concern. The Commander of the Joint Force outlined significant progress achieved by the Joint Force in recent months and pointed out its major weakness in terms of air capability and the intelligence system. He called for the establishment of a United Nations support office to respond to the challenge of sustainable funding of the Joint Force. The Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations addressed the role of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund in building sustainable peace and security, called for greater coordination among security, development and humanitarian actors, aiming at ensuring effective programming and resource mobilization. Council members expressed strong support for the work of the Joint Force and condemned the spiking terrorist attacks across the region.

In closed consultations, the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support briefed the Council, and the discussion revolved around support to the Joint Force.

Libya

On 21 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on Libya. The Council was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Ján Kubiš, and the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, T. S. Tirumurti, in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1970 \(2011\)](#) concerning Libya. The members of the Council welcomed progress made in the country's political process, stressed the importance of maintaining the current momentum towards holding elections on 24 December and called for the withdrawal of foreign fighters and mercenaries. Some members called for the prompt deployment of the ceasefire monitoring component under UNSMIL and underscored the need for an inclusive reconciliation process, comprehensive economic reform and post-conflict reconstruction and increased humanitarian assistance.

On 17 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on the situation in Libya, during which the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, presented her Office's twenty-first report on the situation in Libya, pursuant to resolution [1970 \(2011\)](#). She updated the Council about the latest development of her Office's work regarding the situation in Libya. The Prosecutor maintained that it was mostly the obligation of States to surrender those against whom warrants of arrest have been issued by the Court, and that the Court's warrants of arrest must be executed in a timely fashion.

Mali

On 26 May, the Council held consultations via videoconference to discuss the developments in Mali. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), El-Ghassim Wane, briefed the Council. The Council discussed the latest situation in Mali, in which the transitional President, Prime Minister and other officials were arrested by elements of the Defence and Security forces on 24 May 2021. The Special Representative outlined the turn of events, as well as his efforts and those of the African Union and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in response to the situation.

The Council issued a press statement in which it condemned the arrest of the Malian leaders and officials and called for their safe, immediate and unconditional release. In the press statement, the Council also called for the immediate resumption of the civilian-led transition in Mali, leading to elections and constitutional order within the established 18-month timeline, in accordance with the transition charter. The Council reiterated its strong support to ECOWAS mediation efforts and its support to MINUSMA in continuing to implement its mandate as prescribed in resolution [2531 \(2020\)](#).

Somalia

On 25 May, the Council held a briefing and consultations on Somalia. It was the first in-person meeting held since December 2020. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), James Swan, and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Francisco Madeira, briefed the Council. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Somalia also participated in the meeting.

Noting the summit between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member States as from 22 May in Mogadishu, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia welcomed the resumption of dialogue among Somali leaders and urged all Somali leaders to work in good faith and to commit to a clear way forward with regard to the holding of elections. They also pointed out the security and humanitarian challenges facing Somalia and appealed for increased international assistance. Council members welcomed the progress under way at the summit and encouraged Somali leaders to prioritize compromise and dialogue amid a fragile security environment and dire humanitarian conditions. They also discussed the transition to Somali-led security.

In response to the successful conclusion of the summit among Somali leaders on 27 May, the Council issued a press statement on 28 May, in which it welcomed the agreement reached at the summit and encouraged Somali leaders to maintain that positive momentum so that elections could take place as scheduled. It also expressed its full support for UNSOM and AMISOM as the country prepared for elections, implemented the road map outlined in the appendix to the 27 May communiqué and worked to deliver the transition to Somali-led security, as called for in Council [2568 \(2021\)](#).

Sudan

On 20 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS). The Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the

Sudan and Head of UNITAMS, Volker Perthes, who stated that despite the progress the Sudan had made towards peaceful transition, delays in establishing key representative bodies, continued intercommunal conflict and unanswered violence against women and girls threatened the stability of the Sudan and the civilian population during the transition process. The Council members welcomed the economic reforms and security commitments of the transitional Government. Many condemned recent intercommunal clashes in Darfur and called for rapid establishment of pending transitional bodies, particularly the Transitional Legislative Council. Others called for more international support for the Sudan during its transition process, suggesting increased debt relief.

South Sudan

On 28 May, the Council adopted resolution [2577 \(2021\)](#) to renew the mandate of sanction measures imposed on South Sudan until 31 May 2022. In the resolution, the Council expressed its readiness to review arms embargo measures through, inter alia, modification, suspension or progressive lifting of those measures, in the light of progress achieved on five key benchmarks.

United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei

On 11 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2575 \(2021\)](#) to renew the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei until 15 November 2021.

Asia

Afghanistan

On 3 May, the Security Council issued a press statement in which the Council members condemned in the strongest terms the atrocious and cowardly terrorist attack that took place at Pul-e Alam in Logar Province, Afghanistan, on 30 April 2021. The attack, which took place during the month of Ramadan, resulted in at least 21 people killed, including high school students, and more than 100 civilians wounded.

On 10 May, the Security Council issued a press statement in which the Council members condemned in the strongest terms the atrocious and cowardly terrorist attack that took place in Dasht-e-Barchi in Kabul on 8 May 2021. The attack, which took place near a school, resulted in at least 50 people killed, many of whom were girls, and wounded more than 150 civilians.

Middle East

United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant

On 10 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) and heard briefings from the Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, and the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Nadia Murad. The Special Adviser presented his sixth report ([S/2021/419](#)) on the work of UNITAD, noting that the rapid expansion of UNITAD evidence holdings, combined with the use of advanced technology, had allowed for significant progress in the implementation of the mandate of the Team. The Nobel Peace Prize Laureate underlined the importance of transforming evidence into justice and accountability. Council members welcomed the achievements made to date by

UNITAD and its close cooperation with the Government of Iraq. The Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations called for continued assistance from the international community to develop national capacities in the areas of security, economy and the judiciary.

Iraq

On 11 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, briefed the Council on recent developments in Iraq and on the two latest reports of the Secretary-General on UNAMI (S/2021/426) and on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives (S/2021/395). The Special Representative updated members on the political, economic and security developments in Iraq, including the ongoing preparations for early elections. The Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations also participated in the meeting and delivered a statement, affirming that the Government was making significant strides and working at the highest levels to respond to the demands of the people. Council members reiterated support for Iraq in delivering free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraqi-owned early elections, carrying out crucial economic reforms and combating terrorism. They also commended Iraq for progress made on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals.

On 27 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2576 (2021), extending the mandate of UNAMI until 27 May 2022.

Lebanon

On 11 May, the Council held consultations via videoconference on Lebanon to discuss the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004) (S/2021/396) and was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo. Council members discussed the multiple crises faced by Lebanon, reaffirmed support for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of the country and highlighted the importance of fully implementing resolution 1559 (2004).

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

In May, the Council held several meetings on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, including consultations via videoconference on 10 and 12 May, an open debate via videoconference on 16 May, a discussion under “Any other business” on 18 May and an in-person monthly briefing on 27 May.

During the consultations on 10 and 12 May, the United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, updated the Council on the deteriorating situation in occupied East Jerusalem and the escalations in Gaza, and emphasized that the devastating cycles of violence would only stop with a political solution of the conflict that ended the occupation and realized a two-State solution on the basis of United Nations resolutions, international law and mutual agreements. Council members expressed deep concern about the latest situation in Gaza and about the tensions and violence in East Jerusalem. They also noted with serious concern the possible evictions of Palestinian families from homes they had lived in for generations in Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem and voiced opposition to unilateral actions. They called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and respect for international law, reiterated support for the two-State solution and urged the intensification and acceleration of diplomatic efforts.

When discussing the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under “Any other business” on 18 May, the majority of the Council members highlighted the urgent need for the Council to speak out in one voice in calling for a ceasefire, for a cessation of the violence and for the protection of civilians. Most Council members also reiterated support for a draft press statement proposed by China, Norway and Tunisia.

The 16 May open debate conducted via videoconference was chaired by the State Councillor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China. The Secretary-General delivered opening remarks, followed by a briefing by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process. The following participated in the meeting: Ministers of Tunisia, Norway, Ireland, State of Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, representatives of other Council members, Israel, Algeria and the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations. Written statements from 28 delegations were also received. Warning that the hostilities were utterly appalling and the fighting had the potential to unleash an uncontrollable security and humanitarian crisis, the Secretary-General stressed that the only way forward was to return to negotiations with the goal of a two-State solution. The Special Coordinator reiterated the appeal for an immediate cessation of hostilities and called on the international community to take immediate action to enable the parties to step back from the brink. Council members expressed grave concern regarding the crisis related to Gaza and the loss of civilian lives and casualties, and called for a de-escalation of the situation, for a cessation of the violence and for respect for international humanitarian law. They also stressed the need for the immediate provision of humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian civilian population.

On 22 May, the Security Council issued a press statement in which Council members welcomed the announcement of a ceasefire in Gaza beginning 21 May, called for full adherence to the ceasefire, mourned the loss of civilian lives resulting from the violence, stressed the immediate need for humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian population, supported the call of the Secretary-General for the development of a package of support for reconstruction and recovery, and reiterated the importance of achieving a comprehensive peace based on the vision of a region where two democratic States, Israel and Palestine, live side by side in peace with secure and recognized borders.

At the in-person briefing on 27 May, the Council heard remote briefings from the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process, the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, and Columbia University professor, Rashid Khalidi. The Permanent Observer for the State of Palestine to the United Nations and the Deputy Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations also participated and delivered statements. Noting that from 10 to 21 May, 253 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli air strikes while 9 Israelis and 3 foreign nationals had been killed by rockets launched from Gaza, the Special Coordinator stressed that it was crucial to end the violence, address the humanitarian consequences and seek long-term political solutions to the conflict, including by creating a political horizon that allowed the parties to return to the path of meaningful negotiations. The Commissioner-General of UNRWA underlined that a strong UNRWA could bring a sense of normality to the lives of Palestinian refugees, called for predictable and sufficient funding and emphasized that the recovery phase should be accompanied by a genuine political track aimed at lifting the blockade in Gaza, in line with resolution 1860 (2009). Mr. Khalidi emphasized the importance of addressing core issues such as the status of Jerusalem and shared his suggestions on possible steps the Council could take to achieve lasting peace and security in the State of Palestine and Israel. Most Council

members stressed the need to stabilize the ceasefire, increase support for the recovery and reconstruction of Gaza to the benefit of the local population, and strengthen the efforts of the Council to resolve the recurring conflict towards a two-State solution.

Syrian Arab Republic

On 5 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on the Syrian Arab Republic (chemical weapons). Members of the Council were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, on the latest monthly report of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The Under-Secretary-General highlighted the need to clarify all remaining outstanding issues of the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic. She also informed the Council of the work of the Declaration Assessment Team, fact-finding mission and Investigation and Identification Team, including the publication of its second report on Saraqib. The Under-Secretary-General also informed the Council of the decision on the issue of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, adopted at the twenty-fifth session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. The Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey to the United Nations also delivered statements to the Council.

On 26 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on political and humanitarian issues relating to the Syrian Arab Republic. Members of the Council were briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir O. Pedersen, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator. The Permanent Representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Turkey also delivered statements to the Council.

The Special Envoy reiterated the need for a political solution led and owned by the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), facilitated by the United Nations and backed by constructive international diplomacy. He reaffirmed his commitment to facilitating the work of the Constitutional Committee and expressed the readiness of the United Nations to convene a sixth session of the Small Body of the Committee when condition allowed. The Under-Secretary-General covered four points in his briefing, including water shortages in the north-east of the country, the ongoing economic crisis, the protection of civilians and humanitarian access. Council members expressed support for the good offices of the Special Envoy, expressed concern with regard to the security deterioration of the situation of the ground and reiterated support for a political solution in line with resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). They also elaborated on their priorities in improving the humanitarian situation in the country.

Yemen

On 12 May, the Council held a briefing via videoconference on Yemen. The Council heard briefings from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, and the Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement and Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, Lieutenant General Abhijit Guha (retired) (consultations only). The Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations delivered a statement during the briefing. Members of the Council interacted with the three briefers in the consultations held via videoconference following the briefing.

The Special Envoy gave an update on the political process in Yemen. He noted that the parties were not closing in on a deal, and he called on an immediate stop to attacks on Marib, the lifting of restrictions on imports through Hudaydah and the

return to political negotiations. The Under-Secretary-General highlighted the increased risk of famine, the spread of COVID-19 and the economic collapse in Yemen. He expressed concerns about the protection of civilians, humanitarian access, funding for humanitarian aid and the economic situation and highlighted the urgency for a national ceasefire and the need for peace. Lieutenant General Guha provided an introduction on the recent security situation in Hudaydah and called on both parties to exercise maximum restraint and cease all hostilities.

The members of the Council expressed their support for the Special Envoy and the expectation that the Houthis would meet with him soon. They called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, particularly in Marib. They recalled their statement of 16 April and underscored that only a lasting ceasefire and political settlement could end the conflict and humanitarian crisis in Yemen. The Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun, in his capacity as President of the Council, later delivered the above elements to the press.

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 4 May, the Council held a debate via videoconference on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council was briefed by the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko. During the meeting, the High Representative presented his recent semi-annual report on the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement and gave an overview on the latest situation in the country. Council members noted some recent political progress, including the municipal elections held in 2020, and expressed their support for Bosnia and Herzegovina on the implementation of the Agreement, electoral and constitutional reform, and combating the COVID-19 pandemic. Council members expressed support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Latin America

Colombia

On 11 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2574 \(2021\)](#), in which it expanded the mandate of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia to include the additional task of verifying compliance with a particular category of sentences to be issued by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace and extended it until 31 October 2021.
