



Security Council

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Letter dated 11 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I would like to draw your attention to certain aspects of holding Arria-formula meetings, which the Russian Federation as well as other colleagues host from time to time.

Such gatherings are defined in the relevant note by the President of the Security Council ([S/2017/507](#)) as “a flexible and informal forum for enhancing ... deliberations” and there are no further relevant organizational details or understandings in any working methods of the Council. However, there has been a long-standing tradition among members of the Security Council to participate in such meetings organized by their colleagues, at least, out of respect to them, whether they approved or disapproved of the topic.

However, since recently we have been noticing attempts by some members of the Council to impede the holding of those “Arrias” that they do not like. While being unable to block these meetings, those countries choose not to participate in them while trying to limit their audience by objecting to their webcast through the United Nations WebTV platform. That was the case, in particular, of the Arria-formula meetings organized by Russia on 21 May 2020 (follow-up to the previous Arria-formula discussion on the situation in Crimea, in which we participated), as well as 2 December 2020 (implementation of the 2015 Minsk Package of Measures on the settlement in Ukraine: a year since the Paris “Normandie” summit). We believe that this represents an attack on transparency and the freedom of opinion and expression, which is shameful per se, and not becoming of States members of the Security Council. In such circumstances, with attempts to revert to political censorship, we have no other choice but to act reciprocally. This is not our choice, but we cannot leave these actions and evident double standards without reaction.

I would appreciate it if you could circulate the present letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia

