



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 28 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the pleasure to inform you that, under the presidency of Tunisia, the Security Council will hold a high-level open debate on the theme “Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts”. The meeting will be held virtually on 6 January 2021 at 8.30 a.m.

In order to guide the discussion on the subject, Tunisia has prepared a concept note (see annex).

I would highly appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

*(Signed)* Tarek **Ladeb**  
Permanent Representative of Tunisia



**Annex to the letter dated 28 December 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

**Concept note for the Security Council high-level open debate on the theme “Challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts”, to be held on 6 January 2021**

**Context**

1. The maintenance of international peace and security continues to face major challenges, as lasting peace and sustainable security remain difficult to achieve in many parts of the world, especially in fragile contexts on the African continent, where a variety of security, socioeconomic, political and environmental pressures have put populations under considerable strain, creating a risk of violence and conflict.
2. From the Sahel and the Great Lakes region to the Horn of Africa and beyond, drivers of fragility such as violence led by armed groups, organized crime, terrorism and violent extremism, combined with chronic poverty, socioeconomic inequalities, illegal exploitation of natural resources and weak governance, are exacerbating existing tensions, perpetuating cycles of violence and prolonging conflicts, despite the long presence of several United Nations multidimensional integrated stabilization and assistance missions such as the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia.
3. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the growing environmental damage induced by climate change are aggravating issues of fragility across these regions, contributing to mass unemployment, threatening food security, creating conflict over depleting land and water resources and reinforcing existing lines of political or social division.
4. Not only are a rising number of fragile contexts now experiencing prolonged conflicts and high levels of organized violence, resulting in huge flows of refugees and internally displaced persons, but also, in the absence of State authority and efficient institutions, fragile contexts often provide breeding grounds and safe havens for terrorist groups, transnational crime networks (including weapons smugglers and human traffickers) and other violent non-State actors, who use such contexts as strongholds to conduct their destabilizing operations, both locally and on a larger scale, threatening the stability and security of neighbouring countries and international peace and security in general.
5. Fragility may seem like an abstract concern. In fact, it is a main impediment to peacemaking and peacebuilding.
6. While violent conflict and fragility are distinct issues, they are undoubtedly inextricably linked and mutually self-reinforcing to the extent that it would be inefficient to address one without tackling the other.
7. As conflicts around the world become rooted and humanitarian crises proliferate, conviction is growing around the need to adopt more comprehensive approaches for the maintenance of international peace and security in order to address the drivers of conflicts, including the underlying causes of fragility.

8. Even though some drivers of fragility do not fall within the purview of the Security Council, it has to be recognized that not addressing them is clearly having an impact on the efficiency of the Council in discharging its responsibilities.

### **Objectives**

9. The open debate will be an opportunity to discuss how unattended issues of fragility, especially in Africa, can lead to the eruption of new cycles of violence, exacerbate and prolong existing conflicts and become drivers of regional instability through their spillover effect.

10. The discussion could provide insight into how best the Council can integrate an analysis of the interaction between fragility and conflict in better addressing international peace and security and how this interaction can be better informed by local actors and communities.

11. The debate could be an occasion to advance views on how to address issues of fragility related to conflict, including through stronger cooperation with regional and subregional actors.

12. In this regard, participants may wish to consider a number of recommendations in addressing drivers of fragility conducive to violence and conflict, including providing assistance to build efficient institutions, supporting inclusive political settlements, fostering inclusive, resilient and reconciled societies, re-establishing accountable security and justice systems, developing economic management capacities and reinforcing legitimacy through good governance and public service delivery.

13. As many drivers of fragility, such as transnational organized crime, the illicit arms trade and conflict minerals, are also regional in nature, the discussion could reflect on ways to foster regional cooperation in addressing these cross-border issues.

14. The debate will provide an opportunity also to reflect on what addressing the underlying causes of fragility would imply for the Security Council in terms of its interaction with other United Nations organs (the Economic and Social Council, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Human Rights Council and so on) and international institutions to facilitate complementary, coordinated and coherent approaches to peace and security.

### **Guiding questions**

15. Participants may wish to consider the following guiding questions:

(a) How vital are efforts to address fragility for peacemaking in conflict zones as well as for peacebuilding in post-conflict situations?

(b) How can efforts to address fragility be integrated into strategies and approaches for the maintenance of international peace and security?

(c) How can policymakers and international institutions actively manage drivers of fragility, rather than reacting only once conflicts have begun?

(d) How can the Security Council efficiently contribute to breaking the vicious circle of the continuous interaction between conflict and fragility?

(e) How can the Security Council interact better with regional organizations and other United Nations organs, as well as with international institutions, to facilitate complementary and coordinated approaches to peace and security in fragile contexts?

(f) Can United Nations peacekeeping and stabilization missions play a role in addressing issues of fragility in discharging their mandates?

(g) How can such missions better interact and cooperate with local communities to this effect?

(h) Considering that causes of fragility are complex and deep-rooted within their contexts, how can tailor-made strategies to address fragility be devised?

(i) How to bridge better peacemaking with peacebuilding through early consideration of drivers of fragility, especially in relation to institution-building and enhancement?

**Format of the meeting**

16. The high-level open debate will be held virtually on 6 January 2021 at 8.30 a.m. (New York time) and will be chaired by the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Kaïs Saïed. Member States and observers are invited, upon request, to submit a written statement of approximately 500 words to the Security Council Affairs Division (dppa-scsb3@un.org). All statements submitted no later than the day of the meeting will be included in a compilation document.

**Briefers**

17. The following speakers will brief the Security Council:

- (a) The Secretary-General;
  - (b) The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat;
  - (c) The former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.
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