



# Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

**8485**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 15 March 2019, 3.25 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mrs. Gueguen . . . . . (France)

*Members:*

Belgium . . . . .	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China . . . . .	Mr. Wu Haitao
Côte d'Ivoire . . . . .	Mr. Moriko
Dominican Republic . . . . .	Mr. Singer Weisinger
Equatorial Guinea . . . . .	Mr. Esono Mbengono
Germany . . . . .	Mr. Heusgen
Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Djani
Kuwait . . . . .	Mr. Alotaibi
Peru . . . . .	Mr. Duclos
Poland . . . . .	Ms. Wronecka
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Safronkov
South Africa . . . . .	Ms. Tshabalala
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Hickey
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Cohen

## Agenda

### The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2019/193)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in Afghanistan**

#### **Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2019/193)**

**The President** (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Afghanistan to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2019/223, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Germany and Indonesia.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/193, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President** (*spoke in French*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2460 (2019).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the voting.

**Mr. Heusen** (Germany): The result we just witnessed — 15 votes in favour — was the objective that the co-penholders, Indonesia and Germany, had from the very beginning. It was key for us that we demonstrate today that the Security Council is

unanimous in its decision on Afghanistan and on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and that we send a united message to the people of Afghanistan that the Council remains by their side at this time. But I also have to say that resolution 2460 (2019), just adopted, is not the kind of UNAMA resolution that we worked towards as co-penholders over the past six weeks, and it is not the kind of UNAMA resolution that we have had for the past 17 years.

When Indonesia and Germany — and I would like to pay tribute to the good cooperation between us newcomers as penholders — negotiated the text, we reached a very strong consensus on all substantial issues, including on perhaps the most important one, namely, on the urgency of progress with regard to an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. Unfortunately, however, issues that have nothing to do with it and are not related to the excellent work and mandate of UNAMA made it impossible to achieve the resolution for which we had originally aimed. I must admit that I really regret that we were not able to overcome those differences.

We very much lament that such topics as the upcoming elections, the participation of women in the Afghan peace process, the situation of children in armed conflict and the nexus between climate change and security are no longer reflected in the resolution. We have before us a text that really satisfies none of us, but it has UNAMA's mandate at its very heart. Again, we remain united in our commitment to Afghanistan, and that is the most important message.

The mandate duration now is only six months. That should be a reminder that our engagement in Afghanistan is much broader than what we have achieved, which is six months of engagement. Also, when we resume discussions in the fall, we will have a chance to reflect the dynamics in the country with regard to the peace process and the elections. We hope that at that time we will be able to refocus the resolution.

There is, however, one message that is very important — and here I turn to the Afghan Ambassador, who was strongly asking for an extension of one year — that this extension of six months does not mean that the United Nations, this organ and the international community are not united in their support for the Afghan people. The commitment remains, and the 15 votes today demonstrate that. I think that this is a very important message that we want to send today.

I urge colleagues that, when we return to that discussion, which will come faster than we realize, that we take it very seriously and focus on the most important issues on which we shared agreement and agree to leave the marginal issues on the sidelines, so that when we adopt the resolution next time, we give UNAMA the guidance and tools necessary to accomplish its crucial and challenging mission.

**Mr. Djani** (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims of the heinous terrorist attack that took place today at the two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, as well as to the people and the Government of New Zealand. We of course strongly condemn the attack, which took the lives of peaceful people during prayer and left many injured, including two Indonesian nationals at the mosque. We certainly condemn terrorism; it has no place in any society. As New Zealand's close neighbour, we once again extend our condolences.

Much has been said by my colleague the Ambassador of Germany, including that we worked together and collaborated as co-penholders. I would like to extend our gratitude to our colleagues around the table for the support extended to Germany and Indonesia throughout the negotiations on resolution 2460 (2019), on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). It was not an easy task to come up with a text that was agreeable to all, and indeed we had to strike a balance so that more weight was not placed on one side or the other.

The idea, as my German colleague mentioned, was to ensure unity within the Security Council; it is very important to show the world that the Council is united. But the most important part that takes precedence is to side with the people and the Government of Afghanistan, who have been on a long quest for peace and stability. That was the basis for us to ensure that we had a consensual text that was not only acceptable to the Council but also in line with well-being and interests of the people of Afghanistan.

Like my colleague also mentioned, the resolution does not necessarily purport to answer all challenges, but we are confident that it reinforces, in a substantive manner, the indispensable role of the United Nation in support of Afghanistan. That is the main message that

we wanted to see in the text. Certainly, the text can be built upon in future, as the situation warrants.

For the co-penholders, as I mentioned, unity was the priority, and that was what we are sought. We were both happy to play the role of bridge-builder. Once again, we are grateful for the understanding and all the positive contributions in that regard.

I would like to recall the message that Special Representative Yamamoto delivered during last Monday's briefing that the success of the Afghanistan peace process will depend upon international support for local efforts (see S/PV.8481). I think that is the main point that we should work on, and we are delighted that there is a text in that regard.

As can be appreciated, given our discussions, the text before us focuses on what matters most for UNAMA, that is, to continue to operate without disruption to support Afghanistan in its efforts. It underlines the importance of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process; reaffirms once again the strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan; continues support for the Government and the people of Afghanistan as they rebuild their country and strengthen democratic institutions; and also expresses the desire for the Government and the people of Afghanistan to reinvigorate their country's standing as a platform for international cooperation. That is the main gist of the resolution.

As I mentioned before, we will have an opportunity again to further develop the resolution, according to the conditions and priorities of Afghanistan. I would just like to underline that this resolution is a good basis to do that sort of work — to chart positive development in Afghanistan and monitor the areas where the Government and the people of Afghanistan need the international community's support.

This resolution on UNAMA is revolutionary in the sense that it does not simply build on past resolutions but tries to focus on the main priorities and interests of the Afghan people. We have heard in many instances and proceedings that members want a successful resolution, and we hope that this resolution can be read and understood as having a clear mandate. I think it answers that basic prerequisite for which a member has long been asking.

Lastly, I think we should also take into account the positive movement that is happening in Afghanistan. The country is no longer the same as it was several years ago. Let us play our respective roles, befittingly at this important juncture in history. I am positive that the Council will support Afghanistan in all its effort. I think I will leave it at that. Once again, I thank you, Madam President, for all your support. I also thank my brothers, our German colleagues, who worked hard, as well as my team and their team.

**Mr. Cohen** (United States of America): The United States voted in favour of resolution 2460 (2019) today to extend the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for six months, and we would like to thank the co-penholders, Germany and Indonesia, for their diligent efforts.

Let us be very clear about our very strong support for UNAMA. The United States fully supports the Mission's role in Afghanistan's peace process, electoral reforms and coordination of international assistance. We reiterate our steadfast commitment to advancing the prospects for peace in Afghanistan. That is reflected through our intense diplomatic engagement, led by our Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, to build momentum towards intra-Afghan dialogue to end the long-standing conflict. However, we are deeply disappointed that the Council was not able to come to a consensus on a resolution renewing the Mission's mandate for a full year. China held the resolution hostage and insisted on making it about Chinese national political priorities rather than the people of Afghanistan. As a result, the Council had no choice but to accept a short-term technical rollover.

When the Council considers important issues of international peace and security, such as the situation in Afghanistan, it cannot allow the national initiatives of one Member State to derail negotiations. In this case, the issue was China's demand that the resolution highlight its Belt and Road Initiative despite its tenuous ties to Afghanistan and known problems with corruption, debt distress, environmental damage and a lack of transparency. We look forward to working with our fellow Council members in the coming months on a more complete resolution that would extend the Mission for a longer period, which I believe the entire Council agrees that UNAMA and the people of Afghanistan deserve.

We hope that in subsequent negotiations China will focus on how best to advance peace and security in Afghanistan rather than using Security Council resolutions as a platform for inappropriately promoting self-serving initiatives.

**Mr. Safronkov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation voted in favour of resolution 2460 (2019) just adopted by the Security Council to extend the mandate the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan. We believe that the United Nations Mission has an important role in coordinating international humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan. We highly appreciate the courageous and self-sacrificing work of United Nations staff in that country. It is our view that an important precondition for the effectiveness of our joint efforts to resolve the situation in Afghanistan should be the adoption of decisions that are based on a thorough assessment, taking into account the current realities and acknowledgement of the common positions of the international community towards establishing peace in that important State.

The need for such an approach is increasing, in particular at this time, since because Afghanistan is on the verge of fundamental changes in the life of the country and the people. The Afghans themselves must play a key role in resolving national issues. Ensuring the most inclusive peace process in Afghanistan, whose most important task is to seek sustainable national reconciliation, and involving all public and political forces in the country in that process is crucial. We are convinced that stabilization in Afghanistan and addressing the complex challenges facing the country will be possible only through the integrated and consistent approach of the international community. Russia is working to ensure that all Afghan political parties and key external stakeholders act in unity on the basis of common rules.

We regret that on this occasion the Council was not able to adopt a substantive resolution, which would have reflected the coordinated approaches of all Security Council members on the issue of Afghanistan. We once again draw attention to the procedure for negotiating resolutions. We understand that the co-authors were trying to bring the Security Council to a consensus but external pressure prevented the work from being conducted in such a way that the consultation process could take into account the wide range of positions. Some of our colleagues decided to

ignore the views of a number of Council members, at the last moment changing positions on the previously agreed language. That gave rise to a counterproductive situation, ultimately undermining our joint efforts to resolve the situation in the country and to achieve national reconciliation.

In the Council's future work on Afghanistan, we call on all colleagues to take into account the military and political realities in the country. There must be a realistic assessment of the situation in Afghanistan, which requires strengthening the joint fight against terrorist groups, such as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, Al-Qaida and affiliated terrorist organizations. The ongoing focus must continue to be on combating drug trafficking and the narcotics trade. Regional organizations, in particular the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, continue to play an important role. The Moscow consultations formation on Afghanistan and the intra-Afghan dialogue launched in the Russian capital seek solely to achieve lasting and irreversible national reconciliation.

We once again affirm our commitment to working in close cooperation with the Government of Afghanistan, all political parties in the country and regional and international partners. We call on the Council members to act in a mutually respectful way on the basis of consensus in pursuit of a common solution. In that regard, we note the important role that the People's Republic of China can play in finding a lasting settlement in Afghanistan.

**Mr. Hickey** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2460 (2019). We recognize the diligent work of the co-penholders. However, we also regret that it was not possible to adopt a more comprehensive resolution with a 12-month mandate.

The forthcoming presidential elections mean that Afghanistan faces some crucial months ahead. As we have all recognized, it is important that lessons are learned from the earlier parliamentary elections to ensure a transparent, credible and inclusive presidential vote on 20 July. To that end, we believe that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a crucial role to play and that it will be important for UNAMA to work closely and urgently with the new election commissioners in identifying priorities and challenges.

As progress is made, the meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making, from the local community to the negotiation table, is essential. The sustained and empowered involvement of women makes any peace process more likely to succeed. We reiterate that any political settlement should protect the progress achieved on human rights and gender equality in Afghanistan over the past 18 years.

Millions of Afghans face extreme difficulties amid a complex humanitarian situation. The United Kingdom agrees with the Russian Federation that UNAMA has an important role in leading the international response, and we urge UNAMA and the Afghan Government to work together to support the most vulnerable.

**Mrs. Van Vlierberge** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset allow me to express my country's deepest condolences to the Government of New Zealand and to the families of the victims following the terrorist incident in Christchurch yesterday.

Today Belgium voted in favour of resolution 2460 (2019) renewing the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). We did so because the resolution ensures that UNAMA can continue to provide valuable support to the Afghan authorities at a crucial time in the peace process and in strengthening democracy in the country. We welcome the efforts made by the co-penholders to find a common understanding. However, we regret the fact that the Council was not able to reach consensus on a more detailed resolution, thereby depriving the Mission of the necessary political guidance.

As my German colleague eloquently said, a one-year mandate would have allowed the Mission to have better operational planning and more prospects. Renewing the mandate in September will give us the opportunity to rectify that.

**Ms. Wronecka** (Poland): I would like to express our gratitude to Germany, Indonesia and, in particular, their experts on Afghanistan for their dedication and professionalism shown during the negotiations.

We are witnessing new dynamics with regard to the peace process in Afghanistan. That may bring a long-awaited resolution to the conflict, which has caused so much suffering to too many victims. Our intention was to have all such aspects reflected in the resolution. Poland voted in favour of resolution 2460 (2019) to support an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.

Poland is a strong advocate of a global solution to the challenges facing our planet due to climate change. That also applies to Afghanistan, which has been severely affected by desertification, among others. We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to work on adequate risk assessment and risk management strategies in order to mitigate future threats to stability and security.

I would like to conclude our explanation of vote after the voting by reiterating our strong support for Special Representative Yamamoto and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, as well as for Afghanistan and its people.

**Mr. Wu Haitao (China)** (*spoke in Chinese*): The current situation in Afghanistan is at a critical stage, with many important issues on the political agenda this year. China supports the reconciliation process in Afghanistan and the country's efforts to improve its security environment, advance its reconstruction and participate in regional cooperation and development. China supports the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in the continued implementation of its mandate in order to provide assistance to Afghanistan in the relevant areas. China sincerely hopes that lasting peace and long-term development can be achieved in Afghanistan, which is not only in the vital interest of the people of Afghanistan but is also of critical importance to security, stability, development and prosperity in the region.

China appreciates the efforts made by Indonesia and Germany as the co-facilitators of the consultations that led to consensus on resolution 2460 (2019). China voted in favour of the technical roll-over of the UNAMA mandate. The mandate remains unchanged. UNAMA will continue to provide Afghanistan with support in a peaceful reconciliation process, elections, regional cooperation, reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. China actively participated in the consultations on the resolution on the technical roll-over and has made a number of reasonable and constructive suggestions and proposals with regard to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the fight against terrorism, the reconciliation process and regional cooperation. China supports the technical roll-over so that UNAMA can continue its work. However, that should be only a temporary arrangement on which members of the Council should continue thorough consultations.

In his statement, the representative of the United States referred to the Belt and Road Initiative. However, his remarks were at variance with the facts and fraught with prejudice. Therefore, I would like to emphasize the following points.

First, the Belt and Road Initiative has been widely welcomed by the international community. In the six years since the Initiative was put forward, 123 countries and 29 international organizations have signed cooperation agreements to jointly develop the Initiative. Participants agreed to adhere to the principle of building, sharing and actively implementing cooperation projects to promote interconnectedness and bring development opportunities to participating countries.

Secondly, the Belt and Road Initiative is conducive to Afghanistan's reconstruction and economic development. Under the framework, China and Afghanistan will continue to strengthen cooperation in various fields, promote economic and social development in the country and integrate Afghanistan into regional development. China and Afghanistan are actively implementing a memorandum of understanding on the Initiative to promote efforts in the areas of trade and transportation, energy, health and communications and cooperation in other fields.

Thirdly, the Belt and Road Initiative emphasizes openness and transparency. In building the Initiative, China and other countries adhere to the principle of a market economy led by businesses and abide by general international and market rules. A total of 27 countries, including China, have developed the Guiding Principles on Financing the Development of the Belt and Road Initiative, which outline clear provisions for building a transparent, friendly, non-discriminatory and predictable financing environment, with an emphasis on promoting sustainable economic and social development.

Fourthly, the Initiative is one of economic cooperation aimed at achieving shared development and prosperity. It has nothing to do with geopolitics. All countries are welcome to participate and share in the opportunities it affords.

The Council failed to reach an agreement on the extension of the substantive content of the resolution because of the persistence of differences, one of which is that one member in particular repeatedly refused to accept the consensus in the Council for many years and the constructive opinions put forward by others,

which poisoned the atmosphere for consultations. That is obvious and cannot be denied.

**The President** (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of France.

In my national capacity, I reiterate our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims of the reprehensible terrorist attack on the mosques in Christchurch and the people of New Zealand. France stands in solidarity with New Zealand at this challenging time.

At our meeting on 11 March (see S/PV.8481), France recalled at this pivotal time in Afghanistan's history the importance it attaches to unity among international partners and in the Council in support of Afghanistan. We reiterated that, now more than ever, we must remain united in support of Afghanistan's path to peace, stability, democracy and economic and social development.

Germany and Indonesia have made commendable efforts to achieve a substantive and satisfactory renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). However, we deplore the fact that differences among some members of the Security Council on issues that are not directly related to the Mission's mandate, or even to the Council's responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations, have led us to adopt a resolution for a six-month technical renewal. For France, that is not the signal we should be sending to UNAMA and it should in no way set a precedent.

We hope that this time will be used to overcome bilateral disputes and refocus on the core mandate of UNAMA, in particular on issues such as, first, support for peace efforts; secondly, preparations for presidential elections; thirdly, the coordination of development aid and humanitarian assistance; and, fourthly, the promotion of human rights, in particular women's rights. We would like negotiations to resume as soon as possible and be conducted in a transparent and inclusive manner. The United Nations plays an essential role in supporting Afghanistan in its transformation decade. UNAMA, like the many United Nations agencies present in Afghanistan, conducts remarkable work on a daily basis in difficult conditions and deserves the full commitment of the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

**Ms. Raz** (Afghanistan): I would like to make a few points in the context of today's extension by the Security Council of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

Before that, however, let me join previous speakers in expressing the deepest condolences of the people and the Government of Afghanistan about yesterday's terrorist attack in New Zealand. We condemn that attack in the strongest terms and express our solidarity with the people and the Government of New Zealand in the wake of the tragedy.

The adoption of resolution 1401 (2002) marked the start of a new phase in the engagement of the United Nations in Afghanistan. It coincided with the determined efforts by the people of Afghanistan to shape my country's future, one that would see all Afghans, especially youth, taking charge of their destiny. In that regard, the United Nations and all the members of the Security Council have played a crucial role in helping us to achieve many gains that once seemed impossible. Despite remaining challenges, today Afghanistan's progress in consolidating those gains continues to move in a positive direction. That is attributable to the courage and determination of our people and the support of the international community. The adoption of resolution 2460 (2019) today allows the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to continue its mandated activities in support of durable peace, security and stability in our country, which we welcome. As always, we are very appreciative of that.

Nonetheless, we regret that the nature of the negotiations on this year's resolution was such that the divergence of views among some Council members led to a situation whereby UNAMA's mandate was extended for only six months, as opposed to the usual 12-month renewal period. However, we understand the Council's commitment to a forthcoming 12-month extension of UNAMA's mandate. We will utilize the upcoming six months to develop a more comprehensive and effective mandate and draft resolution to serve the people of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan stands at a crucial juncture in its successful transition towards a self-reliant nation living in peace and prosperity. As we are approaching

presidential elections in July, we are focused on ensuring a transparent and credible process that is embraced by our people and marks another important step in consolidating democracy and the rule of law in the country.

At the same time, we are also encouraged in working to advance our Afghan-led and -owned peace process so as to ensure just, dignified and sustainable peace for our people as a matter of priority. The supporting role of the international community and the United Nations remains of great importance to those national processes, as well as in other key

areas, including enhancing development, governance and the rule of law, coordinating the delivery of international civilian and humanitarian assistance and promoting human rights. We look forward to — and we expect — the Security Council's continuing firm engagement in our stabilization efforts on the way forward. That will be vitally important to achieving a fully secure, stable and prosperous Afghanistan, which is a fundamental imperative for advancing international peace and security.

*The meeting rose at 4.05 p.m.*