



Security Council

Seventy-fourth year

8631st meeting

Thursday, 3 October 2019, 3 p.m.

New York

Provisional

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Matjila	(South Africa)
<i>Members:</i>	Belgium	Mr. Pecsteen de Buytswerve
	China	Mr. Yao Shaojun
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Dominican Republic	Ms. Morrison González
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	France	Mr. Michon
	Germany	Mr. Schulz
	Indonesia	Mr. Syihab
	Kuwait	Mr. Alajmi
	Peru	Mr. Duclos
	Poland	Mr. Jamróz
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Mr. Hunter

Agenda

Maintenance of international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution
2347 (2018) (S/2019/711)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Maintenance of international peace and security

Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2437 (2018) (S/2019/711)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden 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/2019/788, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/711, which contains the report of the Secretary-General pursuant to Security Council resolution 2437 (2018).

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: The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2491 (2019).

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

Mr. Allen (United Kingdom): Let me say simply that we very much welcome the Council's decision to renew the authorization for Member States and regional organizations to inspect and seize vessels involved in people smuggling and human trafficking off the coast of Libya. We remain deeply concerned about the ongoing conflict in Libya and the impact it is having on civilians, including vulnerable migrants, refugees and internally displaced people. The Council condemns all acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking in Libya and off the coast of Libya.

The United Kingdom is clear that there can be no military solution in Libya. The only way to bring stability to the country is through a ceasefire and a negotiated political settlement. We remain steadfast in our support for Special Representative Ghassan Salamé and his leadership of the political process.

Mr. Alajmi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We welcome the unanimous adoption by the Security Council of resolution 2491 (2019). We thank the delegation of the United Kingdom for its considerable efforts as penholder on the issue of Libya. At the same time, we commend its flexibility during the negotiations on the draft resolution.

Today, we voted in favour of resolution 2491 (2019), thereby confirming our steadfast position in support of all efforts of the United Nations to address the challenges raised by the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking in the Mediterranean off the coast of Libya.

According to the report of the Secretary-General contained in document S/2019/711, on implementing resolution 2437 (2018), there was an increase in the number of migrant deaths at sea this year as compared to previous years. Migrants continue to face difficult and coercive conditions, in particular because of the security situation in Libya. The continued trafficking of illegal migrants across Libyan territory and off the coast of Libya undermines efforts to achieve peace and stability in that country. We call on all Member States to support the efforts of the United Nations to provide a safe haven for migrants and allow them the

time they need to prepare asylum requests or for their repatriation. That would help to ensure the security, stability, and territorial integrity of Libya as well as non-interference in its internal affairs.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The truth is, we are partially satisfied with the adoption of resolution 2491 (2019), above all because we believe that the monitoring of operations in Libya should be similar to those conducted in the Gulf of Aden, given the statistics on the loss of lives and the atrocities committed against migrants who fall victim to illicit trafficking in persons, murder and gruesome organ harvesting. We are well aware of the origins and causes of those practices but we do know how to end to them. Over the next 12 months, every effort must be made to improve monitoring operations so that they are more effective and to do our utmost to put an end to the pernicious practices to which migrants in Libya are subjected. To that end, and in order to ensure the greater effectiveness of monitoring operations, naval assets should be redeployed as soon as possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to point out the need for the African Union to become officially involved in the efforts to find a solution to the very serious crisis that Libya has been going through since 2011. On 27 September the African Union Peace and Security Council issued a communiqué on the decision by the African Union High-Level Committee on Libya proposing the designation of a joint United Nations-African Union envoy for Libya, and requested that the Security Council take the necessary measures to consider it. We therefore voted in favour of resolution 2491 (2019) so that over the course of the next 12 months a solution can be found to the causes of this crisis that can ultimately put an end to migrants' suffering and martyrdom.

Mr. Safronkov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation supported the adoption of resolution 2491 (2019), which extends the mandate of the special inspection regime on the high seas off the coast of Libya. We have always maintained a constructive attitude to this Security Council initiative, which resulted in the creation of special inspection regimes on the high seas off the coast of Libya to combat the illegal transport of migrants and support the arms embargo regime. When that regime was being created under resolution 2240 (2015), the main practical measure for combating illegal immigration was and still is the European Union naval operation SOPHIA.

Of course, while the resolution was not written with that operation in mind, in practice it was the only genuinely functioning instrument in that problem area of the Mediterranean.

Now, with the operation's key naval component suspended and Brussels unable to reach an agreement on its future, the result is that the regime established by resolution 2240 (2015) is not being backed up with real instruments. That state of affairs has a negative impact on the authority of the Security Council, which as permanent members we are concerned about. We also want to recall the appeal in the Secretary-General's report (S/2019/711) for reinstating SOPHIA's naval functions, and we hope that today's resolution and its call for continued practical measures will help to speed up a decision on resuming the work of SOPHIA's naval component. I also want to stress that we are interested in continuing an informal, mutually beneficial interactive dialogue with the representative of the European Union and SOPHIA's command when the Security Council considers the inspection regime on the Libyan coast or whenever it may be necessary. When we take decisions on extending the regime in future, we will take into account the operation's effectiveness and its practical contribution to ensuring compliance with the arms embargo. In accordance with the resolution's request, additional reports from the Secretary-General will help us make an objective assessment of the operation's effectiveness.

Today I should stress that Russia has always taken a constructive approach to every European effort to counter illegal migration. However, sanctions are definitely not a long-term solution to the problem, which requires a comprehensive approach. The true reasons for mass migration are rooted in conflicts and misery, and in the socioeconomic situation brought about by an illegal military intervention in Libya's internal affairs of Libya in violation of well-known Security Council resolutions, which has led to the inhuman suffering of so many millions of people.

The crimes that have been committed against migrants only confirm our position, which is that the way to combat this problem effectively is to eradicate the related criminal networks. We need to see effective criminal prosecutions at the national level. It is also just as important to create sustainable conditions for restoring peaceful, normal life in the States that have seen a mass exodus. Needless to say, dealing with the reasons for many of the migration-related problems of

the countries in crisis belongs to the arena of political solutions, along with helping them rehabilitate their societies and economies and build institutions. What is basically essential is creating favourable conditions so that people will return to their homes of their own accord.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the adoption of resolution 2491 (2019), renewing for an additional 12 months the authorization for Member States to inspect vessels on the high seas coming from Libya in order to combat the proliferation of migrant smuggling and human trafficking off the coast of Libya, and the concomitant risk to human life. We are grateful to the United Kingdom, as penholder, for its efforts, and we commend the spirit of compromise that prevailed during the negotiations and resulted in our unanimous adoption of today's resolution. It comes at the right time, given the tragedy we are seeing off the Libyan coast as migrants attempt to flee inhumane living conditions in detention centres.

My country welcomes the tangible drop in migrant flows and persons coming from Libya since July 2017, a trend linked to the sanctions imposed on the people involved in migrant smuggling, as well as the effective implementation of resolution 2240 (2015), authorizing inspections of vessels. It is important to continue to implement those measures.

While we welcome the adoption of resolution 2491 (2019), my country reiterates its concern about the lack of naval assets of the European Union's operation SOPHIA and the resulting consequences for its ability to carry out its mission. Limiting SOPHIA's role to aerial surveillance enormously reduces its ability to monitor vessels off the coast of Libya. We hope that the discussions aimed at remedying the problem will have meaningful results for a lasting solution to the challenges in combating migrant smuggling and violations of the arms embargo. Lastly, it is crucial that we work to find a lasting solution to the crisis in Libya with the full support of the African Union, which has a comparative advantage with regard to this issue.

Mr. Yao Shaojun (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China appreciates the seriousness of the problem of illegal migration in the Mediterranean and hopes that the countries concerned and organizations of the region will come up with more effective solutions to it. Accordingly, China voted in favour of the Security Council's adoption today of resolution 2491 (2019). We hope that Member

States will implement it and the previous relevant resolutions carefully and comprehensively, with a view to enabling a full and appropriate solution to the issue. As the resolution requests, the Secretary-General will submit a progress report to the Council in April 2020. Given the important developments in the situation in the region since the adoption of resolution 2240 (2015), we expect the Secretary-General's report to contain information on the progress of relevant operations and that the Council will then comprehensively review the implementation of resolution 2491 (2019) in the light of developments on the ground.

Addressing illegal migration requires that we address both its symptoms and root causes by adopting a holistic approach and focusing on resolving the underlying issues, including extreme poverty, social turmoil and armed conflicts. China hopes that the international community will engage in helping migrants' countries of origin achieve peace and stability, promote economic and social development and consolidate peace and stability through development in order to find a lasting solution to this issue. China is ready to continue to work with other countries to find a proper solution and to maintain regional peace and stability.

Mr. Schulz (Germany): We welcome the unanimous adoption of resolution 2491 (2019), renewing this mandate for a period of 12 months. Considering the situation on the ground, it is crucial to uphold the mandate authorizing Member States and regional organizations to inspect vessels involved in people-smuggling off the coast of Libya. It is also crucial for the international community to speak with one voice. The fighting must stop, and all States must strictly enforce the arms embargo. These are the preconditions for the long-overdue return to a credible and inclusive political process in Libya.

The European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA) is in this regard a key contribution of the European Union to Libya's stability. The operation contributes to the achievement of two objectives: first, to enforce the arms embargo, and, secondly, to combat human trafficking. Just recently the mandate of EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA was extended until the end of March 2020. In that respect, we wish to reiterate that the suspension of the operation's naval assets is temporary and that even in the absence of

those assets, the mission is operational and making an important contribution to assisting Libya.

The Council's decision today allows it to operate and to perform in the best possible way; this decision is also a strong sign of support for the efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Salamé to bring a negotiated peace to Libya.

Mr. Michon (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the unanimous adoption of resolution 2491 (2019), which extends for 12 months the legal framework established by resolution 2240 (2015) and

reaffirms our collective determination to combat tirelessly the smuggling of migrants and refugees off the coast of Libya.

This collective undertaking, which is the responsibility of us all, is part of the international legal framework, in particular international conventions on the law of the sea, on international organized crime and on refugees. As stated in resolution 2240 (2015), the rights, humanity and dignity of refugees and migrants must be fully respected by all.

The meeting rose at 3.20 p.m.