

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 17 July 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith an assessment of the work of the Security Council for the month of November 2019 during the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (see annex).

The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations. While other members of the Council have been consulted, the assessment should not be considered as representing the views of the Council.

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

*(Signed)* Jonathan Allen  
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 17 July 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

**Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (November 2019)**

**Introduction**

In November 2019, under the presidency of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Security Council held 20 formal meetings, including 2 private meetings, and 13 informal consultations. The Council adopted four resolutions and two statements by the President and issued four press statements.

**Africa**

*Guinea-Bissau*

On 4 November, the Council adopted a statement by the President ([S/PRST/2019/13](#)) in which it expressed deep concern over the social and political situation in Guinea-Bissau. The Council called upon the President, José Mário Vaz, and the Government led by the Prime Minister, Aristides Gomes, to resolve their differences, and drew attention to the urgent need to hold presidential elections on 24 November 2019 in order to conclude the electoral cycle and allow for a peaceful transition of power to an elected president. The Council also urged the defence and security forces of Guinea-Bissau to continue to remain neutral and avoid interfering in politics throughout and beyond the electoral process.

On 11 November, the Council held closed consultations on the situation in Guinea-Bissau, at which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Guinea-Bissau and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, gave a briefing.

*Horn of Africa*

On 4 November, the Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, and the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Fatima Kyari Mohammed, gave a briefing to the Council on the United Nations-African Union joint visit to the Horn of Africa from 19 to 29 October 2019, which was focused on women and peace and security. The Deputy Secretary-General visited Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan.

The Deputy Secretary-General said that the joint visits had helped to strengthen the implementation of United Nations-African Union frameworks on peace and security, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want and the Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative of the African Union. While acknowledging that the chance for peace in the region was real, she urged the international community to find lasting solutions to the region's complex challenges, including those related to gender equality and the representation of women. The Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations added that the international community needed to encourage investment in women and girls and that peace operations had a responsibility to provide gender-sensitive facilities.

Council members welcomed the visits and noted the joint work of the United Nations and the African Union on women and peace and security.

### *Central African Republic*

On 7 November, the Council held a meeting with troop- and police-contributing countries to the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). The Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Bintou Keita, and the Deputy Military Adviser, Major General Hugh Van Roosen, gave briefings.

On 15 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2499 \(2019\)](#), by which it renewed the mandate of MINUSCA until 15 November 2020; maintained the troop ceiling at 11,650 military personnel; formalized the support of MINUSCA for the implementation of the February 2019 peace agreement; enabled MINUSCA to provide good offices, security, operational, logistical and technical support to the presidential and legislative elections in the Central African Republic; and restated the tasks and responsibilities of MINUSCA with respect to the protection of civilians.

### *Sudan and South Sudan (Abyei)*

On 14 November, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2497 \(2019\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) until 15 May 2020; maintained the troop ceiling at 3,550 personnel and the authorized police ceiling at 640 personnel; and extended until 15 May 2020 the mandate modification under which UNISFA provides support to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

### *South Sudan*

On 6 November, the Council held closed consultations on South Sudan, at which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, David Shearer, gave a briefing.

On 22 November, the Council issued a press statement in which it took note of the agreement by the parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan to extend the pre-transitional period by 100 days, effective from 12 November. The Council members expressed concern that the parties to the Agreement had not made substantive progress on the implementation of critical tasks of the pre-transitional period, including transitional security arrangements and determination of the number and boundaries of states, and called upon the parties to make immediate progress on those tasks in order to form a unity Government.

### *Democratic Republic of the Congo*

On 13 November, following the independent strategic review of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and ahead of its mandate renewal in December 2019, the Council held closed consultations on the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, gave a briefing.

On 26 November, the Council discussed the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in closed consultations under the agenda item entitled “Other matters” following increased violence in the Beni territory of North Kivu Province. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Head of MONUSCO, Leila Zerrougui, gave a briefing.

### *Somalia*

On 15 November, the Council adopted resolution [2498 \(2019\)](#), in which it recalled its decision to impose targeted sanctions and reaffirmed the arms embargo

on Somalia and the ban on the import and export of Somali charcoal; introduced restrictions on transfers to Somalia of certain improvised explosive device components; and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Somalia established pursuant to resolution [2444 \(2018\)](#) until 15 December 2020.

On 21 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on Somalia. Briefings were given by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, James Swan; the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia, Francisco Madeira; the Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission of Somalia, Halima Ismail Ibrahim; and the Chair of Somali Non-State Actors, Osman Moallim.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia said that important progress had been made on reforms but that further progress would require dialogue and consensus between the Federal Government of Somalia and key federal member states. A year without effective cooperation had become an obstacle to achieving national priorities, and tensions in Jubbaland posed risks of violence if not carefully managed. He called upon leaders and stakeholders to redouble their efforts to complete the federal constitution by June. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia said it was important for Somalia to pass the electoral bill and amend the political parties law. The Chair of the National Independent Electoral Commission said the clan-based power-sharing model had been a temporary measure on the road to one-person-one-vote elections. The Chair of Somali Non-State Actors said that Somalia needed to step up the pace of preparations for free, fair and inclusive elections, and called for the strengthening of the representation and participation of women.

On 25 November, the Council issued a press statement in which Council members underlined the importance of holding a peaceful, inclusive, credible and transparent one-person-one-vote election, and called upon the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states to resume dialogue in order to resolve outstanding issues.

### *Sahel*

On 20 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, at which briefings were given by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, Alpha Barry; the Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service, Koen Vervaeke; the Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and a civil society representative, Assitan Diallo.

The Assistant Secretary-General said that the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel needed more equipment, enabling capabilities such as air assets, and training in order to deal with a worsening security environment. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) required a robust and more proactive mandate in order to contribute more to regional counter-terrorism efforts. The Permanent Observer of the African Union urged the Council to agree to the requests of the Group of Five to give the Joint Force a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and access to United Nations assessed contributions. The Managing Director for Africa of the European External Action Service outlined the extensive financial contribution of the European Union to strengthening the autonomy and accountability of the Joint Force. The civil society representative called upon the Group of Five to ensure the protection of civilians and mainstream gender

considerations across its operations, while noting that the militarization of the Sahel was not the path to peace.

On 21 November, the Council issued a press statement in which Council members expressed their deep concern about the security and humanitarian situation in the Sahel. They welcomed the recent steps taken by the States of the Group of Five for the Sahel towards the operationalization of the Joint Force and encouraged the States to ensure that the Joint Force continued to scale up its level of operation over time in order to demonstrate increased tangible operational results. Council members recalled that a military response to the threats faced by the Group of Five for the Sahel could be effective only if embedded in the implementation of inclusive regional and national strategies encompassing security, governance, development, human rights and humanitarian issues.

### *Libya*

On 6 November, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, gave a briefing to the Council on the situation in Libya. The Prosecutor remained committed to fulfilling her mandate and called upon the Council, the States parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the international community to stand firmly by the Court and its mandate to end impunity for the gravest crimes, as accountability and deterrence were pillars for stability, progress and prosperity in Libya. The Court had made progress in its existing investigations, but fugitives with outstanding arrest warrants had not been handed over, including Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf al-Werfalli and Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled. She recalled the responsibility of States for the arrest and surrender of Court suspects.

Council members expressed deep concern at the continued violence in Libya. Most Council members expressed full support for combating impunity and helping to restore the rule of law in the country. In that regard, some Council members urged cooperation with the Court. Other Council members noted the Court's lack of progress in the investigations in Libya and recalled the principle of complementarity in the work of the Court and the national judiciary.

On 18 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), at which briefings were given by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNSMIL, Ghassan Salamé, and a civil society representative, Rida Al-Tubuly.

The Special Representative warned that the direct consequences of foreign intervention were increasingly evident in Libya, including the involvement of mercenaries and fighters from foreign private military companies. More than 200 civilians had been killed and more than 128,000 displaced since April. The Special Representative confirmed that preparations were under way for an international summit to be hosted by the Government of Germany in Berlin. The civil society representative said that the international community should empower female leaders and those Libyans on the ground who wanted peace.

Council members called upon the international community to support the resumption of the political process in order to end the conflict. Many Council members called for an end to foreign interference and for strict adherence to the arms embargo. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Libya, Mohamed T.H. Siala, asked the Council to speak out against the rising toll of civilian casualties and the attack on Tripoli by General Haftar, and expressed his support for the upcoming conference in Berlin.

## Europe

### *Bosnia and Herzegovina*

On 5 November, the Council held a briefing on Bosnia and Herzegovina and unanimously adopted resolution [2496 \(2019\)](#), by which it extended the authorization for EUFOR-Althea under Chapter VII of the Charter. The High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko, and the Head of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Programme for TRIAL International, Selma Korjenčić, gave briefings.

The High Representative expressed regret that the government formation process had taken over a year, severely impairing the parliament's ability to adopt new legislation. He warned that continued divisive and destabilizing rhetoric, glorification of war criminals and denial of the genocide in Srebrenica would further damage the possibility of reconciliation. The lack of progress on the implementation of existing legal judgments and judicial reform was deeply concerning.

The civil society representative said that further reconciliation was needed and would require putting an end to the glorification of war criminals and implementing relevant national and international legal judgments.

Most Council members welcomed the report of the High Representative and expressed concern over the divisive rhetoric and lack of progress due to the failure to form a government. The Permanent Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina said that he welcomed the unanimous adoption of the resolution; that his country continued to aspire to European Union membership and was fully committed to implementing the reforms required for integration, including on the rule of law and good governance; and that prosecution of all war crimes was essential.

### *Cyprus*

On 21 November, the Council held closed consultations to discuss the situation in Cyprus. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary Anne DiCarlo, updated Council members on the talks between the parties.

## Middle East

### *Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question*

On 20 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, at which briefings were given by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Nickolay Mladenov, and the Executive Director of the Gisha Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement, Tania Hary.

The Special Coordinator said that, following the serious recent escalation between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza, the situation remained highly volatile. He noted that negative trends on the ground continued, including the decision of Israel on 1 November to advance approximately 2,600 housing units. He reiterated that the United Nations regretted the announcement by the United States of America on 18 November that it no longer viewed settlements as inconsistent with international law, and he stressed that the position of the United Nations on the illegality of settlements remained unchanged, in line with Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). He emphasized the importance of credible Palestinian elections and of upholding the international consensus on resolving the conflict on the basis of the two-State solution in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions.

The Executive Director of the Gisha Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement said that Israel continued to control many aspects of daily life in Gaza, while the humanitarian situation continued to deteriorate. She claimed that the deliberate isolation of Gaza by Israel, aggravated by intra-Palestinian divisions, was as much an obstacle to peace as settlements. She called upon the international community to insist that Israel allow the maximum possible access of people and goods, subject only to necessary and reasonable security procedures.

Most Council members reaffirmed their support for the two-State solution, condemned the firing of rockets from Gaza towards Israel and stressed that Israeli settlements were illegal under international law. Some underlined the importance of holding inclusive and credible Palestinian elections alongside efforts for intra-Palestinian reconciliation. One Council member reiterated its announcement on 18 November that the establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank was not per se inconsistent with international law, noting that it took no view on the particular legal status of any individual settlement. The Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations rejected this announcement as unlawful and irresponsible. The representative of Israel welcomed the announcement.

#### *Lebanon*

On 25 November, the Council held closed consultations on the implementation of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). The Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Ján Kubiš, and the Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, Mohamed Khaled Khiari, gave briefings.

#### *Syrian Arab Republic*

On 5 November, the Council held a private meeting, at which the Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Fernando Arias, and the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, gave briefings.

On 14 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations to discuss the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, at which the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock, gave a briefing.

The Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs updated the Council on the humanitarian response to the 11 million people in need of assistance across the Syrian Arab Republic, the impact of hostilities in the north-west of the country, the situation in the north-east and the critical need for the renewal of resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#), and reminded the Council of the wider regional situation. Council members expressed concern at the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 22 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations to discuss the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir Pedersen, and a board member of the Syrian Women's League, Sabah Alhalak, gave briefings.

The Special Envoy updated the Council on the launch of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva on 30 October, which he hoped would open the door to a political effort to overcome nearly nine years of conflict, in accordance with resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). The board member spoke on the gendered impact of the conflict on millions of women and the importance of ensuring accountability; securing the effective participation of Syrian women in the political process and in all aspects of peace and security; and the release of detainees and an end to forced disappearances by all parties.

Council members welcomed the launch of the Constitutional Committee and urged that progress be made on all elements of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#).

### *Iraq*

On 26 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD). The Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Karim Asad Ahmad Khan, and a member of Iraqi civil society and Yazidi from Sinjar District, Mr. Kachi, gave briefings.

The Special Adviser said that UNITAD was now fully operational. Donations from Member States had allowed the Team to expand the scope of its investigations to include all the communities that had suffered under Da'esh. The Team had made significant progress in gathering evidence and identifying the perpetrators of crimes against the Yazidi community. The Special Adviser thanked the Government of Iraq, the Iraqi judiciary and the Kurdistan Regional Government for their exemplary support and cooperation.

Mr. Kachi recounted the horrific mass executions in the village of Kocho in August 2014. He thanked the Council for creating UNITAD and asked the international community to acknowledge that the crimes committed against the Yazidi community amounted to genocide.

Council members welcomed the progress made by UNITAD and the increased cooperation with the Government of Iraq. Some members applauded the expansion of the scope of the UNITAD investigation to include other minorities. Some members recalled the need for UNITAD and all those involved in combating terrorism in Iraq to coordinate their efforts with Iraq and to respect its sovereignty as well as its jurisdiction over crimes committed on Iraqi territory. The Permanent Representative of Iraq welcomed the extension of the mandate of UNITAD for 12 months, until September 2020, and praised ongoing efforts to identify perpetrators and hold them accountable.

### *Yemen*

On 6 November, the Council issued a press statement in which Council members welcomed the signing of the Riyadh Agreement between the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council on 5 November 2019. Council members reiterated their full support for United Nations efforts to work for the rapid resumption of comprehensive and inclusive negotiations to end the conflict and move towards a peaceful transition. They also reiterated their call for the parties to continue broader implementation of the Stockholm Agreement.

On 22 November, the Council held a briefing and closed consultations on Yemen, at which briefings were given by the Under-Secretary-General and Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths; the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ursula Mueller, and the Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA) and Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, Lieutenant General Abhijit Guha.

The Special Envoy said that, following the signing of the Riyadh Agreement and de-escalation on the ground between the Houthis and the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen, momentum towards a political settlement in Yemen was building. The United Nations would expend every effort to get broader talks under way. The Assistant Secretary-General said that October and November had seen the lowest levels of violence in 2019 so far. Nevertheless, Houthi restrictions on access



for humanitarian workers were causing unacceptable delays in getting humanitarian aid to those who most needed it.

Council members welcomed the Riyadh Agreement and supported the efforts of the Special Envoy. Council members underlined the importance of humanitarian access.

### **Thematic and other issues**

#### *Non-proliferation/Democratic People's Republic of Korea*

The Council held closed consultations on 13 November to receive an update from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1718 \(2006\)](#), Christoph Heusgen.

#### *Women and peace and security*

On 4 November, the Council concluded its Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security, which had begun on 29 October.

### **Policing in United Nations peacekeeping operations**

On 6 November, the Council held a briefing on policing in United Nations peacekeeping operations, at which briefings were given by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the Police Commissioners of MINUSMA, MONUSCO and UNISFA, and a Mayoral Adviser from Bangui.

The Under-Secretary-General said that United Nations police continued to work closely with regional, subregional, national and local partners and had more work to do to increase the proportion of female peacekeepers. The Police Commissioner of MINUSMA, Issoufou Yacouba, said that MINUSMA police were assisting with civilian protection and the re-establishment of State authority, including through training sessions provided in conjunction with the European Union mission, EUCAP Sahel Mali.

The Police Commissioner of MONUSCO, Awale Abdounasir, warned that too many governments had concentrated on a militarized response to organized crime in fragile States when judicial approaches would have proved more effective. The Senior Police Adviser for UNISFA, Mary Gahonzire, noted the important role played by UNISFA police in communities, including with regard to addressing sexual and gender-based violence.

Council members expressed support for the critical work of United Nations police officers, with some members focusing their interventions on the importance of strict adherence to mandates and others on the need for provision of better equipment to United Nations police.

#### *Chemical weapons*

On 22 November, the Council adopted a statement by the President ([S/PRST/2019/14](#)) on the maintenance of international peace and security, in which it reaffirmed its strong support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction and for the work of OPCW in accordance with the Convention. The Council stressed the importance of implementing the Convention and called upon all States that had not yet done so to become parties to the Convention without delay. It reaffirmed that the use of chemical weapons constituted a violation of international law and condemned it in the strongest possible way. It expressed its strong conviction of the need for accountability for those responsible for the use of chemical weapons.

It welcomed the continuing cooperation between the United Nations and OPCW within the framework of the Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and OPCW, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

*Reconciliation*

On 19 November, the Council held an open debate on the role of reconciliation in maintaining international peace and security, at which briefings were given by the Secretary-General, António Guterres; the Dean of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution at George Mason University, Alpaslan Ozerdem; and the Director of Elman Peace, Ilwad Elman.

The Secretary-General said that reconciliation processes had played a crucial role in resolving ethnic, religious and political disputes in places such as Cambodia, Rwanda and Northern Ireland. He cautioned that approaches to reconciliation needed to evolve to keep pace with the complex nature of present conflicts. The Dean of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution provided his overview of lessons learned from past reconciliation processes, including in the Balkans. He highlighted the example of the post-war reconciliation initiatives of Coventry, United Kingdom, including with German cities such as Dresden, and underlined the positive role that local authorities could play. The Director of Elman Peace spoke about peacebuilding and reconciliation in Somalia. Reconciliation was not a single event; it was a process. Rebuilding trust and ensuring inclusivity were critical. She called for greater inclusion of women in reconciliation processes and for increased financial investment in peacebuilding, including through the Peacebuilding Fund.

More than 50 speakers took the floor. Council members emphasized the importance of national ownership, linking national and local reconciliation processes, rebuilding trust between citizens and State institutions, and strengthening the rule of law, transitional justice and the participation of all segments of society, in particular women and youth. Several Council members highlighted the importance of United Nations cooperation with regional organizations in support of national reconciliation.

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