



Security Council

Distr.: General
31 August 2020
Original: English

Letter dated 28 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefing provided by Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “The situation concerning Iraq” convened on Wednesday, 26 August 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Iraq.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter dated 2 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council (S/2020/273), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, these briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**

No country or community has been spared the devastating impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), and Iraq is no exception. To the contrary, the pandemic has aggravated the deep existing economic, social and political challenges.

These are a few salient numbers to illustrate the humanitarian concerns. Poverty has increased by over 10 per cent in recent months. One-third of Iraqis now live below the poverty line, and two out of five suffer multiple deprivations in accessing basic social services and rights. Food consumption is now insufficient for more than 3 million Iraqis due to the reduced purchasing power rather than food scarcity. With regard to education, more than 11 million school and university students across Iraq have seen their studies disrupted. Alarming, gender-based violence has doubled amid dwindling options for victims to seek assistance and find shelter.

With regard to our response to those challenges, I reiterate my earlier message with regard to humanitarian access on the ground. We need a simplified system that enables currently immobilized humanitarian actors and supplies to rapidly reach people in need. Positive discussions are under way, and we now hope to receive a decision within days. In terms of security, conditions for humanitarian actors are also hazardous in certain areas, as was starkly highlighted today by the explosion of an improvised explosive device that impacted a World Food Programme convoy in Ninawa.

Economic difficulties are rarely separate from humanitarian concerns. Iraq is expected to experience a 9.7 per cent decline in its gross domestic product (GDP). Oil revenues, severely affected by a steep crash in oil prices, have nearly halved. The private sector has been particularly impacted by job losses and income reduction. It also remains hindered by a lack of reforms. Non-oil GDP growth is slowing in a country that is in dire need of economic diversification.

Lest we forget, corruption remains endemic, and its economic cost untold, as it continues to steal desperately needed resources from the ordinary Iraqi, eroding investor confidence. Crucially, this scourge of corruption also affects many of Iraq's security issues. The Iraqi Government recognizes these challenges and has made economic and financial reform a priority. The Minister of Finance is expected to deliver a detailed economic reform plan to Parliament imminently. But, for important, painful reforms to take root within a historical context of perceived rights and entitlements, the political class must come together as one, prioritizing the country's interest and protecting the vulnerable. So far, however, we have seen too little of that spirit.

Nevertheless, let me emphasize that these reforms are of great importance to unlocking a brighter future for all Iraqis, in which the country can move from putting out fires to building sustainable solutions and domestic resilience. As I have said before, an environment that promotes inclusive growth and employment remains the best remedy against unrest, conflict and external interference. The Government of Iraq is undoubtedly operating in the eye of multiple storms at once. Unresolved, long-standing grievances have not disappeared. Iraqis want their voices to be heard. In recent months, social unrest has continued throughout Iraq, albeit somewhat muted by the ongoing pandemic.

Of great concern is another spike in the killings and targeting of activists and human rights defenders. The silencing of peaceful voices by exerting pressure on

activists and media, by confusing the scene or, even worse, by shedding blood is an affront against basic rights and dignity.

Let us also remember those still missing, those in need of medical care and those who had to flee the country, often living in difficult circumstances and unable to return because of grave threats and intimidation. Yet we find reason to be cautiously encouraged by the statements and some early actions of the current Government. Indeed, we are witnessing a move towards greater accountability, more robust support for freedom of expression and assembly and a tangible commitment to justice. These are certainly hopeful signs, but further action is urgently needed to deliver true justice and accountability. Condemning the violence and announcing investigations are only a first step.

Those who know and love Iraq recognize how puzzling the Iraqi context is, with too many parties pursuing their own narrow interests, weakening the State from within. Oblivious partisanship and short-sighted zero-sum politics continue to be major obstacles to progress. But, to be clear, no party, person or entity must be allowed to hijack the legitimate demands of the Iraqi people.

To my great regret, armed groups continue to recklessly flex their muscles, generally seeking to create an environment of blunt intimidation. This means that, while Iraqi citizens are in desperate need of a stable, safe and secure environment, the sabre-rattling continues. Surely, we all agree that Iraqis can scarcely afford another cycle of escalating violence. It is high time for these militant actors to take a long, hard look in the mirror. Benefiting from internal divisions and exploiting security gaps, Da'esh continues to claim lives.

The Government of Iraq also operates in a uniquely challenging geopolitical environment. I would like to salute and encourage Iraqi efforts to emphasize national independence and sovereignty. The Iraqi Government is determined to keep multiple channels of communication and exchange open, opting for State-to-State dialogue and relationship-building first and foremost.

I sincerely hope that Iraq will be given further room to focus on its domestic resilience instead of being used as a venue for different power struggles. The recent escalation in the Iraqi-Turkish border areas is also a matter of great concern. We continue to urge both countries to resolve their differences through dialogue and cooperation, with full respect for national sovereignty.

A central popular demand has consistently been the holding of early elections, and the date of 6 June 2021 has now been announced. However, Parliament has not yet resolved the crucial questions of seat apportionment and constituency delineation. Technical considerations, not partisanship, must govern their finalization.

Equally important, the Independent High Electoral Commission must be strengthened and freed from persistent political pressures, particularly in personnel selection, as well as the development and implementation of electoral procedures. To address electoral challenges and build public confidence in its impartiality and technical capabilities, the Independent High Electoral Commission also needs to adopt workable measures, such as a comprehensive and inclusive voter registry, a transparent, tested and reliable election results system, and a judicious framework to handle electoral complaints and appeals. Of course, UNAMI stands ready to assist.

Restoring public trust is hard work. Within that context, free and fair elections will prove crucial. An electoral reset could open a new and important chapter for Iraq. But for that to happen, the elections must be credible. This is the responsibility

not only of the Independent High Electoral Commission and the Government, but also of all Iraqi political actors and electoral stakeholders.

Turning to relations between Baghdad and Erbil, as I have said many times, constructive negotiations are the only viable way forward. The Iraqi Constitution was drafted under great time pressure in 2005. General principles were enshrined in the text, with their implementation left to be specified by subsequent supporting legislation.

But, 15 years later, that lack of specificity continues to shape the debate between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government — 15 years without an agreement on the gradual enhancement of the federal system, without a deal on natural resource distribution or disputed territories and without laws enacted to clearly define the rights and obligations of both Baghdad and Erbil.

Instead, we are witnessing another instance of ad hoc crisis management. I am certain we can all agree that it is past time for Iraq to become more than the sum of its components. Of course, we cautiously salute the agreement, albeit tenuous, recently reached by Baghdad and Erbil on issues, including the payment of Kurdish public salaries. Earlier this month, we commemorated the sixth anniversary of the horrific Sinjar massacre. I regret to yet again report that a preliminary agreement on a unified administration and stable security structures has failed to materialize. A final agreement can, and must, now be reached without delay. Anything else is intolerable negligence.

Furthermore, in my most recent briefing in May (see S/2020/397), I emphasized that, in the Kurdistan region, as elsewhere in Iraq, transparency, fighting corruption, freedom of expression and fundamental reforms are of critical importance. I must repeat that message today. Forceful responses to public criticism or the shutting down of media outlets are surely not the way forward. In confronting complex challenges, Governments must also continue always to defend fundamental rights and freedoms.

If I may, I will say a few words about the rate of return for the remaining 1.4 million Iraqi internally displaced persons (IDPs), which is now at a three-year low. Understandably, it is the desire of every Iraqi to live in a country without displacement camps, but these camps will not disappear until durable solutions are found. We have initiated positive discussions with the Government, but I would like to re-emphasize that the wishes of IDPs regarding return or integration must be prioritized. That in turn requires the cooperation of receiving and/or host communities.

We now turn to the issue of missing Kuwaiti, third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. UNAMI is engaging with the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities to repatriate Kuwaiti remains exhumed from a mass grave site in southern Iraq last January. Despite the severe travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic, I am optimistic that the transfer will take place in the near future. Meanwhile, Kuwaiti forensic laboratories continue their complex DNA analysis to identify those Kuwaiti remains already repatriated last year. We look forward to the announcement of their results in due course.

In conclusion, I would like to pay tribute to the courage, discipline and sacrifice of Iraqi women and men in confronting their shared hardship. It is essential that we maintain our support to the brave Iraqis, who are not giving up and who continue to push for change. I will end by emphasizing that time is a critical factor and that it is high time for tangible results.

Annex II

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang

I thank Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her informative briefing, and I would like to express our appreciation to her and all the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for their dedicated work. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Iraq to this meeting.

In May, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 2522 (2020), extending the mandate of UNAMI for one year. It was a clear message of support from the international community to Iraq for its stabilization, reconstruction and development efforts.

At present, the Government and the people of Iraq, under the leadership of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi, are working hard to address the economic challenges, advance the political process, fight terrorism and combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The international community has every reason to commend those efforts and to support Iraq's pursuit of peace, development and a better future for its people. In that connection, I wish to highlight the following points.

First, we should respect Iraq's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. As Iraq is planning to hold early elections in June 2021, the political process in the country is at a crucial stage. The international community should respect Iraq's ownership of and leadership in all its endeavours. In giving a helping hand, the international community must listen first to the views of Iraq, respect its sovereignty and refrain from imposing solutions and interfering in its internal affairs. UNAMI should provide election assistance in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the relevant resolutions.

Iraq has repeatedly protested against the unilateral military actions of some countries on its territory. We reiterate that Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity should always be respected. We join the Secretary-General in calling on the parties concerned to resolve issues that could escalate tensions in Iraq through peaceful means.

We welcome the continued efforts of Iraq to build balanced and mutually beneficial relations with its neighbours and partners, and we commend the collaboration between Iraq and Kuwait in resolving the issue of missing Kuwaiti persons and property.

Secondly, we should support Iraq in safeguarding its national security and combating terrorism. At the opening of the 2020 virtual counter-terrorism week last month, Secretary-General Guterres warned that terrorists are exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic to advance their objectives. He specifically mentioned that the terrorist force is continuing its efforts to reassert itself in Iraq and Syria. His call for vigilance is further vindicated by the recent increase in terrorist attacks in Iraq.

We call on the international community to continue to support Iraq in consolidating the hard-won results of counter-terrorism and in addressing the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. We should also support Iraq in bringing terrorists to justice in accordance with its domestic laws and reject double standards and politicization in counter-terrorism. China recognizes the important work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) in collecting evidence and encourages UNITAD to ensure Iraq's full access to the evidence so as to advance its national accountability efforts.

Thirdly, we should help Iraq to address the current challenges and boost socioeconomic development. Iraq is now facing economic and fiscal hardship, exacerbated by low oil prices and the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcome the measures taken by the Government of Iraq to tackle those challenges, such as enhancing preparedness and responsiveness to the pandemic, ratifying the Domestic and External Borrowing Law, fighting corruption, et cetera. We also welcome the resumption of talks between the federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments on revenue- and resource-sharing, and we encourage their continued engagement to resolve other outstanding issues.

Iraq has suffered immensely from wars. The Iraqi people are longing for a stable and happy life. The international community has an important role to play in this journey of hope. We must intensify efforts to help Iraq carry out reconstruction, diversify its economy, create more jobs, eradicate poverty and improve public services and livelihoods. Promises of help should be fulfilled. There should be no blank check and no political strings attached. Amid the recent surge of COVID-19 cases in Iraq, more international assistance is urgently needed to fight the pandemic and strengthen Iraq's public health system.

China stands with the Government and the people of Iraq in their pursuit of peace and development. We support their efforts to safeguard national sovereignty and security. We join their fight against COVID-19 by sending our expert teams and providing medical supplies. China will continue to enhance its bilateral relations with Iraq; deepen cooperation, including through the Belt and Road Initiative; and contribute to its socioeconomic development for the benefit of all Iraqis.

Annex III

Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the Security Council

We thank Ms. Plasschaert for her comprehensive briefing, her leadership and the great work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in fulfilling its mandate, which we firmly support.

First, we welcome the formation of the new Government led by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi and would like to express satisfaction for the prompt confirmation of all ministers by the Council of Representatives, as well as for the inclusion of women and members of minority groups in the Cabinet.

Similarly, we commend the measures taken thus far aimed at addressing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and enhancing the Government's response to this health crisis, as well as the measures to breach the gap of the budget deficit and improve financial liquidity.

In this vein, the support, cooperation and assistance of the international community to Iraq is fundamental to better address the health and economic crisis and to respond to them with preventive actions more effectively.

With regard to the relations between Baghdad and Erbil, we welcome the resumption of talks between the federal and the regional Governments in relation to the agreement on resources and income sharing. We salute the meetings between the President of the Kurdistan Regional Government and the President of the federal Government, preceded by other meetings with the respective authorities, resulting in the transfer of partial funds to the Kurdistan Regional Government. We hope that dialogue continues, relations are further tightened and an agreement can be reached in this regard.

On another aspect, we want to express concern for the security developments in Iraq, particularly in relation to terrorism activities, which have gradually increased. We continue to encourage the international community to strengthen the cooperation with Iraq towards counter-terrorism efforts in order to prevent the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant from gathering strength, as well as the efforts to establish accountability for the heinous crimes committed by this terrorist group.

In relation to regional stability, we urge other countries to respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and airspace of Iraq and to show restraint and avoid the utilization of Iraq's territory as an arena for hostile confrontations. Moreover, we call on parties to refrain from performing any military activity without the Iraqi Government's consent.

On another aspect, we observe with satisfaction the creation of the high-level fact-finding committee to investigate the use of force against civilians while they exercised their right to protest and assembly and to allow compensation for the families of the victims. The identification of the perpetrators, as well as the establishment of accountability, for those crimes is paramount. There is no peace and stability where impunity prevails.

Considering the increase in cases of gender-based violence, including domestic violence during the implementation of social distancing measures due to COVID-19, we reiterate our call on UNAMI to actively engage with the relevant civil society organizations to find ways to better address the issue and assist the Government in this task. In addition, we urge the Government of Iraq to take the necessary steps to hold the perpetrators of domestic violence accountable and provide appropriate assistance to the victims.

Regarding the file of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, we are hopeful that procedures will resume as soon as restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic are lifted. Also, we note with great satisfaction the display of commitment by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi with regard to solving this issue, as well as the recent visit by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait to Iraq, which we consider crucial steps towards solving this long-pending and important matter for the Government of Kuwait and the families of the missing persons.

Finally, we stress that UNAMI's electoral assistance to Iraqi authorities is crucial for the conduct of fair, free, credible and inclusive Iraqi-owned and Iraqi-led elections in order for Iraq to consolidate its democracy. The Dominican Republic extends its full solidarity to the Government of Iraq in those endeavours.

Annex IV

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Gert Auväärt

As pointed out by several speakers before me, Iraq is facing several challenges. The Iraqi Government must act now and develop long-term measures to overcome them. It is crucial that all political actors show national unity and solidarity and allow Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's Government to do all it can to move towards a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Iraq. We call on the international community to show its continuous support to Iraq in these trying times.

The efforts of the Iraqi Government to combat the coronavirus disease and mitigate the effects of the economic crisis are welcome and should be supported. However, more attention should be paid to the impact of the crisis on vulnerable populations, including women and children.

In order to improve long-term stability and respond to the calls of the people, we urge the Iraqi Government to accelerate structural reforms, including economic reforms, implement effective measures to counter corruption and enforce the rule of law. Furthermore, it is essential to carry out security sector reform and bring all armed forces under State control. It is positive that the Iraqi Government's programme is oriented in the same direction.

We welcome the announcement of elections taking place in June 2021. We look forward to Iraq conducting free and fair elections, with continued electoral assistance by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). We also urge the Council of Representatives to finalize the elections law.

The efforts of the new Iraqi Government towards ensuring accountability for violations carried out during the demonstrations are a step in the right direction. Hopefully, those efforts will continue, with the ongoing engagement of UNAMI and relevant United Nations bodies.

Although there are no longer violent crackdowns on protests, several worrisome incidents have occurred during recent months, including violence against protesters and arbitrary arrests of journalists, as well as killings of civil society activists. We call on the Iraqi Government to ensure the protection of human rights, including the freedom of expression and assembly, and to hold the perpetrators to account.

Regarding regional developments, I would like to stress the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. We call on all actors to refrain from any military action, which would threaten the stability of Iraq.

Finally, concerning the issue of the missing Kuwaiti persons and property, even though progress has been limited owing to COVID-19 related restrictions, I welcome the commitment of the Iraqi Government to resolving the outstanding issues and the positive contacts between the two countries in this regard.

Annex V**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Anne Gueguen**

[Original: French]

I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Plasschaert, for her briefing. She knows that she has the full support of France.

I would like to touch briefly on five points.

First of all, I would like to reaffirm France's support for Iraq, a country at the heart of the challenges of the Middle East. The Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, Jean-Yves Le Drian, visited the country last month, and the Minister of the Armed Forces, Florence Parly, is going there to show this support today, at a time when there are many challenges, as the Special Representative has just reminded us.

Iraqi Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi announced and launched a number of reforms to respond to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, strengthen the capacity of the Iraqi State, fight corruption and diversify the Iraqi economy. It is essential that these measures be effectively implemented. The Iraqi people have expressed clear and legitimate demands; it is crucial that they be heard. And the international community must mobilize to support the Iraqi authorities in this endeavour.

The announcement of early parliamentary elections in June 2021 is a positive development. It is essential that all stakeholders mobilize to enable an inclusive, free and transparent ballot in which Iraqis participate in large numbers to choose their representatives. The full, active and effective participation of women in this election is also essential. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq has a strong electoral assistance mandate. We hope that it will continue to carry out this crucial task in the coming months.

We are watching closely the situation in Basrah and in the south of the country. It is essential that freedom to demonstrate be guaranteed throughout the country. It is also imperative that the alleged perpetrators of violence against demonstrators be brought to justice.

Secondly, I want to reiterate France's commitment to respecting Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is essential that the country remain free from regional tensions. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/792) mentions Turkish incursions into Iraq. France shares Iraq's serious concerns about this and calls for de-escalation.

Thirdly, I would like to recall that the Da'esh threat has not disappeared, as we were able to see at Monday's briefing on the status of this threat. It is therefore essential that the action of the Global Coalition to Counter Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant alongside the Iraqi authorities continue and that its modes of action adapt to the evolving threat. I welcome the operations recently conducted by the Iraqi authorities to fight Da'esh. The support of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant for the fight against impunity must also help prevent a resurgence of terrorist violence.

Fourthly, the humanitarian situation is a long-standing concern that the COVID-19 pandemic only reinforces. With 1.77 million vulnerable people in the

country, it is unfortunate that restrictions on humanitarian access persist. France joins the Secretary-General's call for those restrictions to be lifted.

Finally, I would like to say a word about the developments concerning missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. The health situation has not allowed us to make much progress on this issue, but we know that the Iraqi authorities are determined to move forward, and we will remain attentive to this matter.

Annex VI**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Günter Sautter**

I would like to make five rather short points.

The first one is on the Government of Iraq. Germany welcomes the first measures undertaken by the Government of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. These measures and the declared priorities of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's Government are in the right direction: they aim to address the legitimate needs and demands of the Iraqi people. It remains important to see a veritable commitment of the Iraqi Government to implement the much-needed political, social and economic reforms. We welcome the first measures on anti-corruption as a positive first step.

My second remark is on the electoral process. We note the Government's announcement of early parliamentary elections for 6 June 2021. Germany stands ready to support the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in its electoral assistance efforts during the preparations for next year's elections. Elections have to be held in a free, fair and democratic manner. Germany, as one of Iraq's leading donors, stands ready to continue its substantial support to Iraq and to work closely together with the Iraqi Government in addressing the challenges and in building a prosperous and stable Iraq.

My third remark is on violence against peaceful protesters and accountability. We remain deeply concerned by reports of ongoing arrests and acts of violence and intimidation against protesters, civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists. We condemn in particular the recent targeted assassinations of activists in Basrah and Baghdad. Systematic attempts to threaten and prevent people from exercising their fundamental right to peaceful assembly and their freedom of expression are unacceptable. We welcome the Iraqi Government's stated commitment to protect all peaceful protesters, civil society activists and human rights defenders and their fundamental rights. We reiterate the importance of accountability and welcome Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's pledge to end impunity. We are encouraged by the Government's initial steps to release detainees arrested during the protests and to push forward with investigations.

My fourth remark is on relations between Baghdad and Erbil. We welcome the continued dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil and the interim agreement. We encourage both sides to speedily resolve all outstanding issues, including those related to natural resources, revenue-sharing and security arrangements.

My fifth and last point regards regional tensions. This has been addressed by several colleagues. We remain concerned by the impact of regional tensions on Iraq and call for continued de-escalation and restraint by all regional and international players. Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected, and Iraq should be neither dragged into, nor become an arena for, a regional confrontation. Instead, Iraq should be able to enjoy amicable relations with all its neighbours and partners. All differences must be resolved through diplomatic means.

It remains crucial that cooperation between the Government of Iraq and its international partners in the fight against terrorism continue, particularly to prevent a resurgence of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and in the region.

Annex VII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani

I would like to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her important updates.

This is a challenging time for all of us and for post-conflict recovery countries such as Iraq. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19), terrorism and violence, economic challenges, and tensions in the region are conditions capable of setting back the progress achieved thus far by Iraq. Nevertheless, with the positive attitude of the Government and the readiness of the people to pursue the reform agenda, current efforts will yield the progress desired by all Iraqis. Allow me to elaborate on these three points.

First, implementing the reform agenda and elections are crucial for the future of Iraq. Indonesia welcomes the formation of the Cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Al-Khadimi, including the appointment of two women ministers. Women are an integral part of nation-building.

We also support the priorities of the new Government, particularly in managing COVID-19, addressing economic crises, fighting corruption and promoting accountability. These are critical for restoring the trust of the people of Iraq and for fulfilling the demands of the peaceful protesters. Holding a free, fair and credible election in June 2021 will be an important next step towards building a democratic country and charting the path of prosperity and stability for which the international community has longed for so many years.

Second is the importance of maintaining stability and security. The remnants of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant/Da'esh and other terrorist groups indeed pose a threat not only to Iraq but also to the region and the world. Indonesia supports the efforts of the Government of Iraq in combatting terrorism. We would also like to underscore that operations to combat terrorism should be conducted in coordination and with the cooperation of the Government.

In a time of challenging geopolitics in the region, it is pertinent for us in the Council to support Iraq, not only in capacity-building and assistance but also in ensuring Iraq's independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is evident that instability in Iraq will be devastating not only to the country but also to the region and to the world, particularly in view of COVID-19, when resources are in limited availability.

Thirdly, support from regional and international partners is key for Iraq. As Iraq confronts many challenges, support by regional and international partners is key for the successful implementation of the priorities set by the new Government. In this respect, we particularly applaud the Iraqi Government's efforts to reach out to the region, in pursuit of the good-neighbourliness principle. We also welcome the strengthening relations between Iraq and Kuwait, and hope that such efforts will continue and expand to other regional and international partners.

This strengthening of Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations is reflected in the area of missing Kuwaiti persons and third-country nationals as well as the return of Kuwaiti property. It is encouraging that the new Cabinet is committed to resolving the outstanding issues, and we hope that once COVID-19 is under control, there will be greater progress on this front and the work of the Tripartite Commission will continue.

The work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq is vital to the various priorities and efforts of the Government of Iraq and for the people of Iraq, and we offer our full support for its mandate and for Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert and her staff. We wish her all the best in these times of pandemic.

In conclusion, we believe that a stable and secure Iraq is part of the solution of the overall conflicts in the Middle East, and we believe that the Iraqi people know what is best for themselves. Indonesia firmly supports Iraq in its path towards peace and development.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Niandou Aougi

I thank Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and for the hard work she is doing with her team in this complex environment. We welcome the representative of Iraq to this meeting.

The Niger welcomes the formation of a new Government in Iraq under the leadership of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. We call on the all political leaders to spare no effort in ensuring good collaboration between the executive and legislative branch to fill in the remaining Cabinet seats.

During these difficult times, it is critical to have stable and strong Government that is ready to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, addressing the socioeconomic and security challenges and delivering on the Government's reform agenda, including the fight against corruption.

The Niger is concerned that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) retains the capacity to continue its attacks against civilian and military targets such as the ones on the international airport, locations in the former international zone, Camp Taji, where the international counter-ISIL coalition forces are positioned.

The persistence of the terrorist activities reminds us of the necessity to continue the support of the United Nations and international partners to Iraq in the fight against the remnants of ISIL in order to thwart its efforts to rebuild.

In addition to terrorist threats, COVID-19 is another challenge for the Government. My delegation commends the early and active engagement of the Government of Iraq in joining global efforts to contain the rapid spread of the pandemic, with the help of the World Health Organization and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). We echo the Secretary-General's call for more international support to the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, including for the key activities identified in it for Iraq.

We commend the determination of the newly formed Government to protect peaceful protesters and to form a high-level fact-finding committee to investigate the killings of activists and other human right defenders and hold the perpetrators accountable.

On the electoral process, UNAMI's support to the Independent High Electoral Commission is crucial to rebuild its institutional and operational capacities. We are happy to see the formation of an expert team to consult with the Independent High Electoral Commission on the establishment of conditions conducive to free, fair and credible early elections. As Iraq takes steps towards a free and inclusive election next year, we call on the international community to support the competent Iraqi authorities to ensure a fair and inclusive election.

In the same vein, the Niger remains convinced that a sustainable process must include Iraqi women and youth and, in that regard, we welcome the nomination of women ministers in the new Government. We also urge UNAMI to continue the consultations with the Women's Advisory Group, whose representation at all levels of political and protection processes remains appropriate.

Lastly, on the issue of Kuwaiti and third-country missing persons, property and archives from the first Gulf War, the Niger commends the determination of UNAMI, the Tripartite Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross to advance in this area despite COVID-19 restrictions. We also welcome

the recent discoveries, which will give closure to some Kuwaitis and further the relationship between the two countries.

Annex IX**Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy**

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing on the situation in Iraq.

We also welcome the formation of the Government of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi and support its efforts to address long-standing key challenges, which include mobilizing all resources to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and addressing the economic crisis, combatting corruption, implementing administrative reforms and launching a national dialogue with all sections of Iraqi society, fighting terrorism and other goals.

We are convinced that a national inclusive dialogue will help overcome internal problems. In this regard, we encourage the resumption of contacts between Baghdad and Erbil, which should restore mutual understanding and resolve differences, as well as help reach a comprehensive agreement on all outstanding issues, inter alia revenues and resources sharing. We are convinced that further improvement of these relations will help Iraq promote security and effective use of its economic capacity for the good of the entire Iraqi nation.

We support the plans of the Government of Iraq to hold free, fair and credible elections next year. As we heard today from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) stands ready to provide electoral assistance to the Iraqi authorities. We believe that the United Nations can play a supportive role in preparation for the elections under the UNAMI mandate approved by the Security Council.

The spread of COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the overall situation in Iraq and resulted in multiple economic and humanitarian challenges. It is important that the international community support Baghdad as it develops comprehensive measures aimed at responding to the COVID-19 outbreak, restoring the economy and improving social aspects.

As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/792) highlights that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant continues to conduct attacks and remains a threat to Iraq's security, we are convinced that this challenge can be effectively countered only through the broadest coordination of counter-terrorism efforts. At the same time, we believe it is necessary for all those involved in the fight against terrorism in Iraq to support the sovereignty of the Iraqi State and coordinate their actions with Baghdad.

We reiterate our consistent approach that Iraq should not become an arena for regional confrontation. We support Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We are ready to support and encourage Iraq's continued efforts to build balanced, constructive and mutually beneficial relations with all its neighbours and throughout the whole region.

We note that our colleagues from the United States have once again tried to blame Iran for destabilizing the situation in Iraq, referring to the United States failed efforts to impose an arms embargo on Iran this month. It clearly seems that they lack opportunities to speak on the situation in the region and try to use every possibility to speak on it — a strange posture, given the fact that they recently did not support two initiatives by Russia to hold a Security Council meeting to discuss the situation around Iran's nuclear deal. In any case, we all know what the origin of the current ongoing turmoil in Iraq was. I will just refer to the well-known position of President Trump, who called the Iraq war “the worst geopolitical mistake of our generation”.

At the same time, we are indeed concerned with attempts to escalate the situation around Iran that might have a negative impact on the internal situation in Iraq. The idea of a unifying agenda in the interests of creating a regional security architecture is increasingly in demand, especially now, as we witness efforts to artificially increase tensions around Iran. We have proposed several ideas for finding a solution along these lines and here invoke resolution 598 (1987) and the Russian concept of collective security in the Persian Gulf. Recently, President Vladimir Putin proposed another initiative to hold a summit of the five permanent members of the Security Council together with Germany and Iran to discuss situation in the Gulf and the ways to improve it. We invite all the parties concerned to positively consider this initiative as an invitation to dialogue.

Annex X**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing. We wish also to recognize the continued dedication of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to the people of Iraq, and we recognize the presence of our distinguished colleague, the Permanent Representative of Iraq.

We begin by welcoming the completion of the Government-formation process, as well as Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's announcement of his priority areas, which include holding free, fair and credible early elections, countering terrorism and enforcing the rule of law. These activities are critical for restoring State authority and ensuring public trust, and we offer our support and encouragement in this regard.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to assail the world with its extensive consequences, and we emphasize the importance of supporting and strengthening, where possible, the Government's efforts to combat the spread of the pandemic and mitigate its impacts. It is crucial that the international community remain actively supportive of the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, of which Iraq is a beneficiary. We welcome the leading role of the World Health Organization, particularly in its acknowledgment of and efforts to address the acute vulnerabilities of internally displaced persons to this virus. The most vulnerable groups must be at the centre of all measures adopted to combat the virus. To that end, we recognize the efforts undertaken by UNAMI and the United Nations country team to bring awareness to the increase in domestic violence amid COVID-19-related measures.

We express concern over continued acts of violence and terror carried out by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), including those that have resulted in civilian casualties. The Secretary-General's most recent report on the activities of UNAMI (S/2020/792) noted that 40 deaths and 45 injuries were attributed to ISIL between 1 May and 9 July. We condemn, in the strongest terms, these acts, as well as the ongoing killing and maiming of children caused by land mines and explosive remnants. We further condemn the targeting of civil-society activists and urge the Government to counter this campaign of intimidation and hostility. Equally important is accountability, which is critical to the reconstruction process. No act violating international humanitarian law or human rights law should be carried out with impunity. These are cornerstone principles under which all actors have a legal obligation and it is imperative that they be scrupulously applied.

We conclude by reaffirming our support for UNAMI. We encourage its continued engagement with the Government of Iraq, in line with Iraq's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence, which, we emphasize, must be respected by all actors.

Annex XI**Statement by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations**

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, for her briefing. South Africa supports and continues to have confidence in her efforts.

South Africa supports the mandate of UNAMI in promoting the strengthening of the Government of Iraq and its electoral processes. We welcome the successful formation of the new Iraqi Government and applaud the inclusion of women and minorities, which will assist in unifying and strengthening the cohesiveness of the country.

We support the drive for an inclusive Government that will bring together all the diverse aspects of Iraqi society into the governance structures. National reconciliation and unity in Iraq are vital in order to avert future challenges stemming from shifting Government policies and actions. Domestic unity, cohesion and determination are urgently needed to build resilience against narrow partisan interests, foreign interference and criminal elements that actively seek to impede Iraq's stability.

South Africa is pleased to learn that the Government of Iraq has agreed to resume monthly payments from its federal budget to the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil. We continue to urge increased and improved cooperation between the national Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, and look forward to consensus on the issue of a revenue-sharing agreement.

South Africa supports UNAMI and the Government of Iraq in its post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts, which provide much-needed humanitarian assistance throughout the country, particularly during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The spread of the pandemic in Iraq has strained an already fragile health-care system.

The easing of restrictions and the failure to adhere to preventive measures or to implement them fully have resulted in a deterioration of the humanitarian situation. Iraq needs to adjust its COVID-19 response actions and diligently apply preventive measures for the purpose of slowing the transmission of the virus.

Peace and security remain fundamental for Iraq to develop its infrastructure, grow its economy and provide basic services to all its citizens. In that regard, South Africa supports the consolidation of control of the Iraqi army over Iraq's entire territory. We also support the continued efforts of the Government to eradicate the threat posed by Da'esh. Iraqis should not live in an atmosphere of terror and intimidation.

South Africa also expresses its deep concern regarding the killing of two civil-society activists and attacks against others in the southern city of Basra. Civic activism is a cornerstone of a representative and accountable Government and must be protected. We therefore urge the authorities to pursue investigations into those horrendous attacks and bring the perpetrators to book in order to uphold standards of justice, accountability, integrity and transparency.

We are encouraged by the collaborative effort of the Governments of both Kuwait and Iraq to locate missing Kuwaiti and other nationals as well as missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. We urge both countries to

work together with the relevant United Nations institutions to resolve these outstanding issues.

In conclusion, South Africa reiterates its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq in line with the principles of the United Nations Charter, and we continue to support UNAMI in the implementation of its mandate.

We also continue to urge the United Nations and the Government of Iraq to consider utilizing the Peacebuilding Commission in order to make greater strides in rebuilding the country.

Annex XII**Statement by the Political Coordinator of the United States of America to the United Nations, Rodney Hunter**

I wish to thank the Special Representative for her briefing today. She and her team continue to distinguish themselves despite the constraints that the pandemic has imposed on their work.

Today I will focus our remarks on just a few key points. I am pleased to report that last week's United States-Iraq strategic dialogue was a great success. The fact that the United States hosted such a logistically complex in-person, strategic dialogue in the midst of a pandemic speaks to our commitment to a stable, sovereign and prosperous Iraq. That Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi, along with his Ministers for foreign affairs and of finance, defence, electricity and oil, led such a delegation speaks to Iraq's good-faith efforts to meet the needs of its people and embrace the international community.

During their meeting at the White House, President Trump and Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi reaffirmed that the strategic partnership between the United States and Iraq is based on a mutual desire for security and prosperity. We continue to work in close coordination to ensure that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham is rendered incapable of posing a threat to Iraq or any other nation, including by holding it to account for the atrocities it has perpetrated. We are committed to long-term security cooperation to build Iraq's military capability and address threats to our shared interests.

The United States is committed to Iraq's economic development as well. By the end of last week's strategic dialogue, the United States and Iraq had signed nine memorandums of understanding codifying bilateral cooperation in health, economic reform, private-sector investment, trade and energy. Five of those memorandums were with United States companies, to help Iraq develop its energy sector.

Moreover, the United States announced nearly \$204 million in additional humanitarian assistance for the people of Iraq, Iraqi refugees in the region and the generous communities that are hosting them. That funding brings the total for the United States humanitarian response for Iraq to more than \$706 million since the beginning of fiscal year 2019, and more than \$2.4 billion in both humanitarian and development assistance since 2014. That assistance will provide critical shelter, essential health care, emergency food assistance and water, sanitation and hygiene services across Iraq, and it continues to support the return of displaced persons, including ethnic and religious minorities. It will also improve access to civil documentation and legal services, enhance the capacity of health-care facilities and increase access to education and improved livelihood opportunities.

We welcome the Prime Minister's 31 July announcement of early parliamentary elections; it is an important step in addressing the Iraqi people's demand for a responsive and representative Government. The Security Council recognized the critical role that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) plays in assisting the Government of Iraq in its election preparations by enhancing electoral assistance language in UNAMI's mandate renewal this past May. I call upon the United Nations and all Member States to ensure that UNAMI has the resources necessary to foster credible, free and fair Iraq-led and Iraq-owned elections.

As a demonstration of support for Iraq's democratic process, the Trump Administration announced plans to fund UNAMI's electoral-support activities. We plan to announce \$10 million in funding, subject to congressional notification, through a voluntary contribution routed through the United Nations Development

Programme. That grant will bolster Iraqi efforts to hold free and fair elections, and we expect that it will include activities to support Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission and enhance voter engagement. Once again, we implore Iraq's other international partners to follow suit and provide voluntary contributions to support UNAMI's invaluable work in helping Iraq prepare for elections.

I also want to reiterate my Government's outrage at the killing of peaceful protesters, civil-society activists and members of the media. To date, more than 600 have been killed and thousands injured. The Government of Iraq must bring those responsible for the killings to justice.

As Secretary Pompeo made clear during the United States-Iraq strategic dialogue, the United States is committed to helping Iraq achieve economic prosperity and freedom from foreign meddling in its internal affairs and through support for local militias. This includes malign influence and activity from Iran, the world's leading State sponsor of terrorism. Iran's actions in Iraq and elsewhere in the region show that it is not interested in being a responsible member of the international community. Instead, Iran wants to sow chaos and mistrust across the region. As we have said many times, the United States will not allow that to happen. That is why we have taken action to reimpose United Nations sanctions on Iran. Iran must never gain access to more modern weaponry to threaten its neighbours or the region.

A stable, prosperous and independent Iraq is what the Iraqi people want — an Iraq that is for the Iraqi people. Iraqi protesters could not have made that any clearer, and the United States stands with them to make it a reality.

Annex XIII**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Viet Nam to the United Nations**

I would like to thank Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, for her valuable briefing. We also appreciate the presence of the Permanent Representative of Iraq.

The recent progress in Iraq is notable and encouraging. Six months ago, when we discussed this matter, violence continued in Baghdad and several other governorates; the formation of a new Government had been delayed; the final text of the new electoral law had not been published; and approximately 1.8 million people were in acute need.

Today, the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/792) and the briefing by the Special Representative present a brighter picture of the country. The Government formation process has been completed with the appointment of all ministerial posts. There have been advances in realizing the Government's commitment to managing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, combating corruption, providing basic services, reforming the economy and strengthening viable and responsive State institutions.

Those priorities represent the Government's efforts to meet the legitimate aspirations of the Iraqi people. Delivery on those commitments would help to stabilize the political situation in the country. We also commend the active engagement of the Iraqi Government with neighbouring countries and beyond. The recent foreign visits by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi are examples of those efforts.

However, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we remain concerned about the humanitarian situation in Iraq. The number of coronavirus infections has increased dramatically over the past two months. Earlier this week there were more than 200,000 confirmed cases, and the number of deaths related to COVID-19 exceeded 6,400. Millions of people are simultaneously facing poverty, food insecurity and the pandemic. Their well-being depends heavily on international assistance. We look forward to the provision of continued help by international partners to the Iraqi Government in their efforts to improve the living conditions of the people and to cooperate with United Nations teams to tackle humanitarian issues.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Special Representative and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for their contribution to the progress in Iraq. The efforts of UNAMI are laudable and are supported by both the local authorities and the international community. The role of UNAMI in assisting the people and the Government of Iraq in coping with their challenges remains essential, and we reaffirm our support for the full implementation of the Mission's mandate.

We also would like to take this opportunity to commend other United Nations agencies and international donors for their efforts to tackle the multiple difficulties in Iraq. As a result of their hard work, we have witnessed positive developments on the ground. We call for continued and tight-knit collaboration between United Nations teams and the Government towards achieving effective solutions for economic, medical and humanitarian problems.

In the long run, we would like to emphasize the fact that Iraq will continue to face tremendous challenges. The situation remains fragile, since the problems facing the country are deep-seated. Viet Nam calls upon the international community to remain strongly committed to providing support to Iraq so that it may alleviate and stabilize the humanitarian situation and further work towards its reconstruction and

development goals. Given the complicated situation in the Middle East, it is also important to ensure full respect for the political independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country. We believe that dialogue, solidarity and national harmony are the key factors in stabilizing the country.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations**

At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to His Excellency Dian Triansyah Djani, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia, on his presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also extend my sincere thanks to His Excellency Christoph Heusgen, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Germany, for his distinguished management of the Council's meetings in the previous month.

I also extend my gratitude to Her Excellency Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her briefing.

Iraq faces great challenges in various fields — economic, security, health and social. However, our willingness to deal with them is greater. The Government is expeditiously working at the maximum level, as promised, to meet the people's expectations and demands by preserving peace and security, providing services, countering the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), fighting terrorism and achieving political and economic reforms.

The situation relating to the COVID-19 pandemic is critical and could lead to the collapse of the health system. The competent authorities have adopted preventive measures to centralize the decision-making process concerning the pandemic and sought to restore stability and ensure the gradual return of public life to normal. Meanwhile, it has taken measures to stimulate the economy and support low-income people. In that regard, Iraq expresses sincere gratitude to the World Health Organization and friendly States for their generous health aid in supporting Iraq to counter the pandemic.

One important commitment that the Government has made is to meet demonstrators' demands. Measures have been taken to fill in the trust gap with the people, especially the youth, by making their voices heard and honouring the people's constitutional rights to peaceful protests and freedom of expression. Despite the financial hardship facing the country, the Government did not hesitate to respond to the aspirations expressed by demonstrators and involved a number of them in the State's public jobs.

The Government has promised to protect the demonstrators from any violations of human rights. In that regard, the competent authorities made major efforts to prevent violent groups from targeting the demonstrators and to reduce the number of incidents to the lowest level possible. Furthermore, the Government placed the families of the victims on a list to receive the benefits stipulated by the martyr's law, which provides financial compensation and all necessary medical treatments to wounded demonstrators.

Countering corruption is at the heart of the reform process. In that regard, the Government has shown great keenness to restore full control of border checkpoints so as to prevent and deter any illegal practices.

The Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, declared 6 June 2021 as the date for the holding of early elections. That declaration was the result of efficient consultations between the Government and the legislative authority. The Government believes that without an inclusive initiative, it will be very difficult to devise sustainable solutions to the crisis in Iraq.

It is unquestionable that the Government gave a response to the political crisis; indeed, it aspires to be a Government that accommodates solutions to urgent

problems. In that regard, certain steps should be taken in advance: first and foremost, the sovereignty of the State must be preserved and honoured; secondly, it is vital to strengthen the rule of law and reclaim the State's control over all armed forces; and, thirdly, foreign Powers must be prevented from turning our country into a base for its political and strategic agendas. Iraq's sovereignty and independence are crucial to the stability and security of the region. Iraq strives to maintain strong relations with countries in accordance with the principles of common interest and non-interference in internal affairs.

The Government pledges to enforce the State's authority by controlling the possession of arms, restricting them to Government and military institutions and enforcing the rule of law. To this end, the Government is engaged in a process of achieving security reform that promotes performance in the field, respects human rights and ensures professionalism, and is countering the militarization of society by preventing any form of non-State intervention. In response to the Government's serious and effective measures, the outlaw groups assassinated a well-known Iraqi expert on violent extremism, Hisham Al-Hashimi. As these groups seek to undermine the authority of the State, the Iraqi Government is determined to pursue the perpetrators and will not allow assassinations to resume in our country and disrupt its security and stability.

Furthermore, the Government believes that its security accomplishments are related to the same factors, most important of which are the success of the counter-corruption campaign and achieving economic reforms, a frank and responsible national dialogue with all components of society, the promotion of patriotism and the respect of diversity in Iraq, and preserving Iraq's sovereignty.

Fighting and countering terrorism is at the core of my country's security strategy. My Government believes that terrorism still poses an imminent threat and represents an obstacle to the reconstruction of liberated cities, the return of displaced citizens and access to humanitarian assistance. To this end, we will work with the international community to facilitate the access of humanitarian assistance and lead negotiations with the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS concerning the presence of international troops in Iraq, on the basis of a shared and inclusive national vision.

Iraq also welcomes all efforts undertaken to date to repatriate the family members of foreign terrorist fighters and urges other countries to receive their non-convicted citizens. There remains an urgent need for concerted efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of terrorism, especially in the liberated areas.

Iraq confirms its strong commitment to establishing friendly relations and cooperation with its neighbours and the international community. At the same time, my country expects the same spirit of cooperation and mutual respect from others. Turkey launched the joint Claw-Eagle and Claw-Tiger military operations in the north of Iraq without any prior consultations with the Iraqi Government. The operations have led to casualties among civilians and military personnel, most recently on 11 August. We understand Turkey's security concerns but what happened is a clear violation of international law. The Turkish violations threaten not only Iraq's sovereignty, but also its security and stability. The Iraqi Government considers the Turkish violations of its territory to be irresponsible measures that do not take into account the promotion and development of a peaceful situation in international relations.

The latest incident was a blatant attack that targeted Iraqi border guards, killing two officers and one soldier from the Iraqi army, in violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and flouting good-neighbourly relations. At this point, the Iraqi Government affirms its right to confront any attack that threatens the

security of Iraq. In this perilous security situation, my country has filed complaints with the Security Council, documenting and requesting urgent steps to prevent future violations.

I confirm before the Council that, in order to avoid any escalation and aggravated consequences, my country adheres to peaceful and friendly means rather than resorting to military measures. This matter is consistently emphasized during the Prime Minister's important visits to our neighbours in the region, allies and friends in the international community.

Concerning relations with Kuwait in the context of cooperation and finding the missing Kuwaitis, this matter is the major focus of our efforts to finalize and fulfil our obligations towards their bereaved families. The Iraqi Ministry of Defence is pursuing its efforts to excavate the sites of Samawah, Khamisiyah, Radwaniyah, Karbala, Salman Pak and Al-Burjusiya for remains. Meanwhile Iraq calls on the Tripartite Commission and the State of Kuwait to accelerate the process of announcing the results of DNA tests of the remains.

Our ongoing and painstaking search efforts continue to unearth a new set of Kuwaiti archives that were supposed to be delivered by the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs in April, but due to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery has been postponed

Concerning compensation, a payment of \$210 million was made on 28 July, leaving an outstanding balance of \$2.6 billion.

The current situation has put Iraq in an extremely difficult position that no Government can survive without international cooperation and solidarity. Accordingly, we aspire to secure the Security Council's support in helping the new Government to achieve its priorities by condemning violations of Iraqi sovereignty by any Member State and preventing such acts in the future; helping the Government to address the main challenges, especially with regard to COVID-19 and the economic and financial crises; actively cooperating with Iraq in the war against terrorism, in which Iraq remains on the front line; and assisting the Independent High Electoral Commission to address the requirements of organizing integrated and free election.

Iraq commends the support of the international community and reiterates that its assistance to Iraq in preserving its national sovereignty will be a cornerstone of the success of the Government. The Iraqi Government has taken pains to enhance its relationships with its neighbours in the region by building bridges of cooperation with them. A first official visit to Saudi Arabia was scheduled for the Prime Minister, but it was postponed due to a health condition of His Majesty King Salman. At the same time, the Prime Minister undertook an official visit to Tehran, where he discussed with President Rouhani bilateral relations between the two countries and ways to enhance them.

Furthermore, the Iraqi Government engaged in a strategic dialogue in June with the United States of America and discussed the prospects of bilateral relations, and most importantly the future presence of United States troops in Iraq. The dialogue also included discussions of future cooperation in various fields, such as the economy, security, culture and health. Iraq welcomes the positive and friendly results of the dialogue that surrounded the official visit of the Prime Minister to Washington, D.C.

Iraq's policy of regional engagement also included the participation of the Prime Minister in the Iraq-Jordan-Egypt tripartite summit, hosted in Amman on 25 August, for the inspiration of a better and prosperous future of the region.

I extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his supportive stances towards Iraq, and we hope that the international community will continue to help its people to achieve a stable and prosperous Iraq. I especially thank the Head of UNAMI and her team in Baghdad and New York for their tireless efforts.
