

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 10 November 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia 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 May 2020 during the presidency of the Republic of Estonia (see annex).

The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Estonia 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) **Sven Jürgenson**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative



Annex to the letter dated 10 November 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia 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 Republic of Estonia (May 2020)

Introduction

During the month of May 2020, the Security Council, being unable to gather physically due to restrictions caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, held 30 open and closed meetings by videoconference. In addition, two Arria formula meetings and one informal interactive dialogue were also held during this time.

The Security Council adopted five resolutions and agreed upon three press statements and four press elements.

The signature events under the presidency of Estonia included a high-level open Arria formula meeting on the theme “Seventy-five years from the end of the Second World War on European soil – lessons learned for preventing future atrocities, responsibility of the Security Council”, held on 8 May; an open meeting by videoconference on the working methods of the Council, held on 15 May; an open Arria formula meeting on cyberstability, conflict prevention and capacity-building, held on 22 May; a high-level open meeting by videoconference on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, held on 27 May; and an open meeting by videoconference on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations (European Union), held on 28 May.

During the month of May, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the work of the Security Council continued thanks to the efforts of establishing new, temporary, working methods from March onwards. The working methods for the month of May were presented in a letter from the President of the Security Council dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372). The Council continued to meet in open and closed meetings by videoconference on the dedicated virtual platform and on the basis of the informal programme of work that was published on the Council’s website. Additional details on the working methods applied during the month of May are included in the last section of the present assessment.

Africa

Libya

The Council held an open meeting by videoconference on 5 May during which it was briefed by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda. She emphasized that despite limitations caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Libya team of the International Criminal Court was forging ahead with its judicial work and investigations. She further highlighted the issues of arbitrary detention and the increasing number of enforced disappearances and hate speech. She noted that Saif al-Islam Gaddafi is a fugitive and that his arrest warrant remains enforceable. She also pointed out that Libya continues to be under an obligation to arrest and surrender Saif al-Islam Gaddafi to the Court. The Prosecutor also recalled that the arrest warrants for Al-Tuhamy Mohamed Khaled and Mahmoud Mustafa Busayf al-Werfalli were yet to be executed.

The members of the Council said that ending impunity for grave crimes was necessary to achieve a lasting peaceful solution for the crisis in Libya, welcomed the

role of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and encouraged relevant States to cooperate with the Court. The representative of Libya also delivered a statement to the Council.

On 19 May, the Council met via open and closed meetings by videoconference on Libya. The Council was briefed by the Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, Stephanie T. Williams. She briefed the Council on the deteriorating security situation in Libya and expressed regret that despite efforts by UNSMIL and the plea of the Secretary-General for an immediate ceasefire to allow Libyans to respond to the common threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, the fighting had escalated with an increase in indirect fire in urban areas that further increases the suffering of civilians. She called for the Council to apply consistent and credible pressure on the regional and international actors that are fuelling the conflict. The members of the Council expressed their concern about the violations to the arms embargo and the further escalations on the ground. They called for the parties to de-escalate the fighting and to allow humanitarian access to the civilians in need.

Somalia

On 21 May, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSAM), James Swan; the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Francisco Caetano José Madeira; and the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Agnes Marcaillou, briefed the Council on the situation in the country.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia updated the Council regarding the implementation of the UNSAM mandate, political and security developments in the country, preparations for the elections and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Somalia. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia gave a briefing to the Council on the implementation of the transition plan, and AMISOM operations. The Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service briefed the Council regarding the situation with the improvised explosive devices threat in the country, the work being carried out by UNMAS, and the needs of AMISOM and the Somali National Army in this regard.

The members of the Council welcomed the progress made in security and political fronts, called for cooperation between the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states, paid tribute to UNSAM, AMISOM and all actors working to bring about peace and stability in Somalia and expressed concern about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in Somalia. The representative of Somalia stressed that the Federal Government of Somalia had taken on an ambitious reform agenda, including security sector and economic reform. He also talked about the negative effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. He underlined the commitment of the Government to move on with implementing national priorities.

On 29 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2520 \(2020\)](#), by which it decided to extend the mandate of AMISOM until 28 February 2021. The representative of the Government of Somalia submitted a written statement upon the adoption of the resolution.

Sudan and South Sudan

On 14 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2519 \(2020\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) until 15 November 2020.

On 29 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2523 \(2020\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) until 3 June 2020, and expressed its intention to decide the future of UNAMID and its follow-on mechanism by 3 June.

By a vote of 12 in favour, none against and three abstentions (China, the Russian Federation and South Africa), on 29 May the Council adopted its resolution [2521 \(2020\)](#). The resolution extended the sanctions on South Sudan until 31 May 2021 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 1 July 2021.

Burundi

On 29 May, at the request of the Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia, the Council discussed the elections taking place in Burundi. During the meeting, the Council members agreed upon press elements calling all stakeholders to preserve a peaceful climate and to continue to utilize peaceful and legal means to resolve any matters that may arise from the electoral process.

Mali

On 11 May, the Security Council issued a press statement on the attack against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). The members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the attack perpetrated on 10 May against a MINUSMA convoy in Aguelhoc, which resulted in the death of three peacekeepers from Chad and four others injured.

Middle East

Iraq

On 12 May, the Council held an open meeting by videoconference and a closed meeting by videoconference on Iraq. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, delivered a statement on recent developments in Iraq and introduced the two latest quarterly reports by the Secretary-General – one on UNAMI ([S/2020/363](#)) and the other on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives ([S/2020/358](#)). The Special Representative reaffirmed the support of UNAMI to the Iraqi authorities in the context of several challenges, including difficult political, social, economic and security situation as well as the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and a drop in oil prices. The Permanent Representative of Iraq also participated in the meeting and delivered a statement.

Council members welcomed the formation of a new Government of Iraq and reaffirmed support for Iraq's efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic and foster economic and social development. They further welcomed the Government's pledge to deliver reforms aimed at meeting the Iraqi people's legitimate demands as well as to hold free and fair early elections after finalizing the new electoral law. The members of the Council reiterated the importance of fully respecting Iraq's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity, and the need to continue to fight against terrorism, including against Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). They also discussed developments related to the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals.

A Security Council press statement was issued on 13 May, welcoming the formation of a new Government of Iraq.

On 29 May, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2522 \(2020\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of UNAMI until 31 May 2021.

Lebanon

The Council held a closed meeting by videoconference on Lebanon on 4 May to discuss the report of the Secretary General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 1 November 2019 to 18 February 2020 (S/2020/195). The members of the Council were briefed by the Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Ján Kubiš; and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix. Briefers noted that the area of operations of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remained mostly calm, despite continued tensions along the Blue Line.

After the meeting, the members of the Security Council adopted press elements, where they commended the key and continued efforts of UNIFIL to maintain calm along the Blue Line, its cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces with the objective of extending the control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory, and stressed the importance of UNIFIL being able to fulfil its mandate.

On 13 May, the Council held a closed meeting by videoconference to discuss the 31st semi-annual report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/329) on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1559 (2004). The members of the Council were briefed the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo. The Under-Secretary-General noted that the implementation of the resolution remains incomplete, as armed groups continue to avoid disarmament.

After the meeting, the members of the Security Council adopted press elements, where they recalled the importance of fully implementing resolution 1559 (2004), which requires the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon. They recalled that the violations of the Lebanese sovereignty, by air and land, should immediately stop.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 20 May, the Council held an open meeting by videoconference and a closed meeting by videoconference on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nikolay Mladenov, delivered a statement, reiterating the call to Israeli and Palestinian leadership, as well as to regional and international partners, to create the conditions for returning to meaningful Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. He warned against the threat of annexation of parts of the West Bank and called for efforts to preserve the prospect of a negotiated two-State resolution to the conflict, in line with relevant United Nations resolutions, international law and bilateral agreements. He also referred to the call by the Secretary-General against unilateral steps that will hinder current diplomatic efforts to create the conditions for bringing Israelis and Palestinians back to the table. He also focused on the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic, noting the concerns regarding the ability of the Palestinian health sector to cope with a potential surge in cases, especially in Gaza. He also informed the Council of the situation on the ground, including the latest incidents of violence and the demolition of Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and in East Jerusalem. The Council members reiterated the need to support steps leading towards creating conditions for resuming Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the basis of internationally agreed parameters. Members also expressed support for a two-State solution and expressed concerns over unilateral steps.

The situation in the Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic)

An informal interactive dialogue was held on 12 May on the issue of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. The participants heard briefings by

the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu; the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), Fernando Arias; and the Coordinator of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team, Santiago Oñate. The Under-Secretary-General reported that there had been limited progress in efforts to clarify the outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of chemical weapons of the Syrian Arab Republic. She provided updates on the work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its investigative mechanisms. The Director General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons explained how OPCW had adapted its activities owing to the consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak and addressed the Council in relation to the report of the Investigation and Identification Team issued by the secretariat of OPCW on 8 April 2020. The Coordinator of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team gave an overview of the investigative work that led to the production of the first report by the Investigation and Identification Team, as well as the conclusions reached.

On 18 May, the Council held an open meeting by videoconference on the political situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Members of the Council were briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir Pedersen. The Special Envoy informed the Council that there had been limited new developments in the political track, but he maintained close contact with Co-Chairs and civil society members of the Constitutional Committee and was ready to convene a third session of the small body of the Constitutional Committee in Geneva as soon as global travel conditions allow. He also noted that the ceasefire in the north-east of the country was holding, despite challenges posed by radical groups active in the area. Council members expressed support for the Special Envoy's continued efforts to move forward with the political process. They called upon all Syrian parties to engage constructively through the Constitutional Committee to reach sustainable peace and reaffirmed commitment to the sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Council held an open meeting videoconference on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic on 19 May. Members of the Council were briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock. The Islamic Republic of Iran, Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic also participated in the meeting.

The Under-Secretary-General reviewed United Nations humanitarian cross-line and cross-border operations. He expressed concern over the worsening humanitarian situation across the Syrian Arab Republic and further highlighted challenges posed by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. He emphasized that both cross-border and cross-line humanitarian response is needed to reach all Syrians in a timely fashion.

The members of the Council expressed their concern at the humanitarian situation, and called upon all parties to ensure safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to all affected populations. They reaffirmed their support for United Nations' humanitarian workers, who effectively provide aid to millions of people across Syria.

The situation in the Middle East (Yemen)

On 14 May, the Council held open and closed meetings by videoconference on the situation in the Middle East (Yemen). The Council heard briefings from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths; and the Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ramesh Rajasingham.

The Special Envoy informed the Council about the progress on the ongoing negotiations with the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah regarding the agreements proposed by the United Nations on a nationwide ceasefire, humanitarian and economic measures, and the resumption of the political process. He also briefed the Council about the worrying military situation in Yemen, as well as the situation in the south where military tensions are rising.

The Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs briefed the Council on the five overall priorities for the wider humanitarian response, including protection of civilians, humanitarian access and delivery, funding, the economy and progress towards peace. He expressed concerns over the worrying humanitarian outlook in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and echoed recent calls by the Secretary-General, the World Health Organization, the International Migration Organization and others, in favour of knowledge and social cohesion over rumours and scapegoating. He also noted the challenges faced by humanitarian workers, including continued restrictions to aid delivery and shortfalls in funding.

Council members expressed concern about the ongoing hostilities and expressed their support for the Special Envoy's efforts to reach agreements on ceasefire, humanitarian and economic measures and the resumption of the political process. They also called on the Government of Yemen and the Southern Transitional Council to de-escalate military tensions and engage under the Riyadh Agreement. During the closed meeting by videoconference, members of the Council had a discussion with the Head of the United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement and Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, Lieutenant General Abhijit Guha; as well as with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen and the Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. After the meeting, press elements were delivered, reiterating support for the call by the Secretary-General for a Yemen ceasefire, expressing concern about the ongoing hostilities and emphasizing support for the Special Envoy and the negotiations on the proposals by the United Nations.

Europe

Bosnia and Herzegovina

On 6 May, the Security Council held an open meeting by videoconference meeting on Bosnia and Herzegovina. It received a briefing from the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Valentin Inzko and from the Executive Director of Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Irena Hasić.

The High Representative presented his recent semi-annual report on the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreements and gave an overview on the latest situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina with regard to the COVID-19 outbreak. He commended the launching, on 28 April, by the tripartite Presidency, of a process to implement 14 key priorities of the European Commission opinion for achieving European Union membership. He stressed that above all, Bosnia and Herzegovina must improve the rule of law and the fight against the big pandemic called corruption. In Mostar, citizens still lack the right to vote in municipal elections. As no state budget has been adopted for 2020, it might not be possible to prepare for municipal polls scheduled for October.

The Executive Director of Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina explained the gaps in Bosnia and Herzegovina's educational system and emphasized that young people need tools, mechanisms and education to contribute to change and bring their ideas to life.

The majority of the Council members called on Bosnia and Herzegovina to go forward with the implementation of the reform agenda, respect the rule of law, and conduct free and fair elections in October 2020. They highlighted their support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's aspirations towards European Union membership.

Asia

Myanmar

On 14 May, the Council held a closed meeting by videoconference on Myanmar. The members of the Council were briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Myanmar, Christine Schraner Burgener. The Special Envoy informed the Council about the recent developments in the country, including the repatriation efforts of Myanmar and Bangladesh, the situation in Rakhine state and the impact of COVID-19 in Myanmar.

Hong Kong

On 29 May, the Security Council discussed developments in Hong Kong under "Other matters".

Afghanistan

The Security Council issued a press statement on terrorist attacks in Kabul and Nangarhar, Afghanistan on 13 May. In the statement, the members of the Security Council condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks of 12 May on the Médecins Sans Frontières clinic in Kabul during which at least 20 civilians, including women and children, were killed, and on a funeral in Nangarhar province during which at least 24 civilians were killed. The Council expressed its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government of Afghanistan. They underlined the Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire in the light of the current COVID-19 pandemic. The Council members reaffirmed that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations constitutes one of the most serious threats to international peace and security and the need to hold accountable the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of these reprehensible acts of terrorism was underlined.

They also reaffirmed the need for all States to combat by all means and in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and other obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts.

Latin America

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

The Security Council held an open meeting by videoconference on 20 May to discuss the situation in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. The meeting was requested by the Russian Federation. The Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo. The Under-Secretary-General pointed out that attempts at reaching a negotiated solution have been unsuccessful in spite of significant international facilitation efforts. The path of negotiation seems to be stalled. Referring to the letter of 13 May 2020 (S/2020/399) addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela regarding the recent military incursion into Venezuela, she stressed that the Governments of Colombia and the United States of

America, and the leader of the Venezuelan opposition denied involvement in the military incursion.

The majority of the Council members reiterated the need to find a political solution to the current situation, in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter. Some members of the Council stressed the importance of delivering humanitarian aid to Venezuela in accordance with humanitarian principles.

Thematic and other issues

Implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council on the working methods of the Council (S/2017/507)

The Security Council held an open meeting by videoconference on 15 May on the implementation of the note by the President of the Security Council on the working methods of the Council (S/2017/507) on the theme “Ensuring transparency, efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Security Council”.

The Council heard briefings on its working methods from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Chair of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and other Procedural Questions, Inga Rhonda King; the Executive Director of Security Council Report, Karin Landgren, and Professor Edward C. Luck of the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University. The Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, speaking on behalf of the Working Group, said that the ability of the Council to discharge its mandate had come under scrutiny during the current extraordinary period. She spoke of debates on working methods as a flagship opportunity for the broader United Nations membership to weigh in, and referred to the fact that many of the interventions had been taken into consideration by the Working Group in the past. The Executive Director of Security Council Report addressed the issue of participation by the wider membership in enhancing the Council’s effectiveness. She found that the best of the pandemic-inspired tools could be retained and developed, allowing the Council more agile and responsive ways to interact with the wider world. She explained that technology could open up possibilities, including for a more dynamic engagement with the field through virtual meetings with various stakeholders. Professor Luck shared perspectives on the evolution of efforts to enhance the working methods of the Council over time. He deemed that the Council’s self-reflection concerning maintaining international peace and security had not always led to better performance on the ground. He recalled that the Working Group had been in the vanguard of the reform movement. He maintained that the ultimate test would be how fully and faithfully the eight Notes by the President agreed to in November 2019 would be implemented.

Council members agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic had created novel challenges to the day-to-day functioning of the Council, and were open to hear from the wider membership on how to enhance the Council’s working methods. The representative of Viet Nam, in his capacity as coordinator for the month of May for the 10 elected members of the Council, delivered a statement in which he emphasized that much more could be done by the Council to better fulfil its mandate and serve the aspirations of wider membership. There should be greater burden-sharing and equal distribution of work among all members of Council. The representative maintained that during the current extraordinary period, greater efforts should be made to guarantee the Council’s ability to conduct its work continuously, including that of subsidiary bodies, in accordance with normal procedures and practices. The representatives of the five permanent members of the Council also made statements in their respective national capacities.

In addition to the Council's members, 41 States Members of the United Nations submitted their statements in writing, some on behalf of groups of countries. The compilation of the statements was issued as a document of the Security Council (S/2020/418).

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

The Council held its annual open debate on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict in the form of an open high-level meeting by videoconference on 27 May. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres; the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer; and Nobel Peace Laureate, member of The Elders, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, briefed the Council.

The Secretary-General presented his report to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/2020/366). The Secretary-General addressed the status of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, noting that in 2019 little progress was made on the matter of protection of civilians, and regarding compliance with international law. In this regard, he remarked that protecting civilians must be a joint effort by Governments, civil society and international organizations. He emphasized the importance of taking further steps to strengthen compliance and accountability with regard to the protection of civilians. He also drew attention to the challenges and opportunities for the protection of civilians in armed conflict in the coming decade. The Secretary-General also addressed the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the protection of civilians, noting the particular vulnerability of those affected by conflict, and repeated his call for a global ceasefire. He reiterated that sustainable political solutions remain the only way to ensure that civilians are kept safe from harm.

The briefers referred to the continuing impact of conflicts on civilians, exacerbated by the pandemic. They called for stronger actions to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, for the protection of civilians.

Council members in their statements underlined the importance of further efforts to protect civilians in armed conflicts and the compliance with international law. They drew attention to the steps taken by the Council, as well as the regional and national levels in this regard. Council members also focused on the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic on the protection of civilians. Non-council members were invited to participate through submitting written statements.

Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations (European Union)

On 28 May, the Council held its annual meeting on strengthening the partnership with the European Union under its agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security. The European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, briefed the Council.

The main message of the High Representative was that the European Union remains deeply attached to the rules-based international order, to multilateralism and to the United Nations and that at a time of global crisis, a Security Council that is able to make the necessary decisions – and not one that is paralysed by vetoes and political infighting – is needed. In the area of peace and security the High Representative focused on the situation in the Sahel and the crisis in Libya, the European Union military operation in the Mediterranean, known as Operation IRINI, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He also drew attention to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the political and humanitarian crisis in the Bolivarian Republic

of Venezuela. He emphasized that support for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity will remain key elements of the relationship of the European Union with its eastern partners. He also stressed that women play a crucial role in securing peace and security.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union. They encouraged stronger cooperation between the United Nations and other international and regional organizations.

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006)

On 29 May, the Security Council held a closed meeting by videoconference to consider the quarterly report of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006). The Chair briefed the Council on the activities of the Committee for the period from 28 February to 29 May 2020.

Arria formula meetings

Two events under the presidency of Estonia were organized as Arria formula meetings:

On 8 May, a high-level open Arria formula meeting was held on the theme “Seventy-five years from the end of the Second World War on European soil: lessons learned for preventing future atrocities, responsibility of the Security Council”.

The debate was chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Estonia, Urmas Reinsalu. The guest speakers were the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell; the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary A. DiCarlo; and Professor of History at Yale University, Timothy Snyder. Following the briefings, all Council members and 61 additional Member States made statements. Forty-five countries were represented at the ministerial level. It was the first virtual Arria formula meeting in the history of the Council that brought together such a large number of high-level participants. It was public and live-streamed on several platforms to increase the transparency of the work of the Security Council.

The main objective of the high-level meeting was to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of the Second World War on European soil and offer an opportunity to discuss the merits of the post-war order. The aim was not only to identify lessons learned from the past but also highlight challenges to the future and to provide a forum to evaluate security threats posed by conflicts in Europe and beyond. The meeting reaffirmed the view that global challenges need global action. Multilateralism is the key in overcoming the current and future challenges.

On 22 May an Arria formula meeting on cyberstability, conflict prevention and capacity building was organized by Estonia in cooperation with Belgium, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia and Kenya. Invited speakers included the Under-Secretary-General of Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu; the Chief Executive of the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore, David Koh; and the Senior Vice President and the Director of Technology Policy Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, James Lewis. The Prime Minister of Estonia, Jüri Ratas made the opening statement and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia, Urmas Reinsalu, welcomed the speakers.

The objective of the meeting was to provide members of the Council with an opportunity to address the global efforts to promote cyberstability and conflict prevention against the background of emerging cyberthreats. The meeting aimed to raise awareness on cyberchallenges to international peace and security, and discuss

existing global, regional and national policy mechanisms in place to mitigate cyberthreats and advance responsible State behaviour.

Working methods

In the given unprecedented circumstances, the aim of the presidency was to ensure the continuation of the work of the Council in fulfilling its mandate to the greatest possible extent. In order to promote transparency of the Council's work, the presidency shared as much information as possible with the wider United Nations membership and the general public. The working methods upheld during the presidency of May were a continuation of the working methods agreed to by the Council since the start of the current unprecedented circumstances, i.e. in March and April, specified in the letters from the President dated 27 March 2020 (S/2020/253) and 2 April 2020 (S/2020/273). For the month of May, the working methods were presented as a letter from the President dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372).

In May, the Council continued conducting meetings by videoconference of the items reflected on the informal programme of work that were published on the Council's website. The presidency continued the organization of open and closed meetings by videoconference in the spirit of the meeting formats used by the Council in regular times – debates, briefings, closed consultations, etc. All open meetings by videoconference held in May were transmitted in full via United Nations Web TV. Participation was also available for concerned countries, specifically those countries referred to under rule 37 and rule 39 of the Provisional Rules of Procedure. The presidency continued the practice of including all statements made in an open meeting into compilations that were published as documents of the Council. The compilation of the select few open meetings resembling regular open debates, namely the debate on working methods on 15 May and the debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict on 27 May also included written statements from the wider membership of the United Nations. The adoption of the Council's resolutions continued to take place through the written procedure agreed upon in March, specified in the letter from the President dated 27 March 2020. The occurrence of adoption of resolutions was reflected on the Council's webpage and in the Programme of Work. The presidency conducted the announcement of voting results of adoption of resolutions in open videoconference meetings. The presidency also expressed its support to the continuation of the work of the subsidiary organs of the Council to the greatest possible extent.

In order to further promote transparency and engagement with the Security Council, Estonia held the regular briefing to the United Nations membership in the beginning of the month. Throughout its presidency, Estonia held briefings with the wider United Nations membership, civil society and the United Nations' media.

Furthermore, Estonia, France and Germany agreed upon a separate document on working methods to be applied during their consecutive presidencies in May, June and July. The aim was to encourage respect of identified good practices, including as described in note 507 (S/2017/507), in order to allow for a more efficient use of the time of the Security Council, to enhance its transparency, promote interactivity and effectiveness, including by securing outcomes to Council meetings. This includes measures for enhancing the interactivity of the debates by granting the briefers the possibility to respond to statements, and also for inclusion of more briefers from civil society in the discussions of the Council.