



# Security Council

Seventy-ninth year

*Provisional*

**9592**<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Thursday, 28 March 2024, 3 p.m.

New York

---

*President:* Mr. Yamazaki . . . . . (Japan)

*Members:*

Algeria . . . . .	Mr. Koudri
China . . . . .	Mr. Geng Shuang
Ecuador . . . . .	Mr. Montalvo Sosa
France . . . . .	Mr. De Rivière
Guyana . . . . .	Mrs. Edwards
Malta . . . . .	Mr. Camilleri
Mozambique . . . . .	Mr. Fernandes
Republic of Korea . . . . .	Mr. Sangjin Kim
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
Sierra Leone . . . . .	Mr. Kanu
Slovenia . . . . .	Mr. Žbogar
Switzerland . . . . .	Mr. Hauri
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Phipps
United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Wood

## Agenda

Maintenance international peace and security

---

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. *Corrections* should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room AB-0928 ([verbatimrecords@un.org](mailto:verbatimrecords@un.org)). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (<http://documents.un.org>).



*The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

### Adoption of the agenda

**The President:** The representative of France has asked for the floor.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I simply wish to indicate that my delegation would like the provisional agenda for this meeting to be put to the vote. I do not think it is necessary to repeat yet again what I said in the Chamber on Monday (see S/PV.9587), during consultations on 6 March and then again yesterday. The Security Council is charged with the task of addressing current international security crises. It is not a forum for discussion on historical issues and, a fortiori, those dating from last century.

Of course — and I say it here in the Chamber in the presence of the Permanent Representative of Serbia and the representative of Kosovo — the Council is always open to hold a debate on Kosovo, the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo and the implementation of resolution 1244 (1999). That was the case last month, when we welcomed President Vučić to the Council (see S/PV.9545), and the door is always open. There will be another meeting on Kosovo next month.

The Council is for addressing current crises. Meetings can be requested by any member of the Council on crises on the agenda. Some Council members, including permanent members, are involved in certain crises on the agenda. It is absolutely normal and legitimate that all meetings requested by those members on that issue be held. On the other hand, the Council is not here to take the place of historians or to legislate.

I therefore ask you, Mr. President, to put to the vote the provisional agenda of today's meeting. I encourage all the members of the Council to not support the holding of this meeting.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Today we are witnessing, for the second time, how the French delegation, under artificial pretexts and manipulating the procedure, is attempting to block a meeting requested by Russia on the topic of the twenty-fifth anniversary of NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia.

At the outset, let me recall that in their previous attempt (see S/PV.9587), our French colleagues claimed that we did not ask Serbia's opinion on convening this meeting, despite the fact that the Acting Prime

Minister of Serbia, Mr. Ivica Dačić, who flew to New York specifically to participate in that meeting, was present in the Chamber at that time. In other words, France openly misled everyone in front of the cameras. But let us leave that to the conscience of our French colleagues. In any event, that lie will forever remain in the meeting records.

Representatives of the French, British and American delegations also stated on March 25 that we allegedly had not consulted with other members of the Council. That is again not true, because the expert discussion took place, as it always does. But to make sure that our colleagues no longer have a pretext to say that they were never consulted, yesterday we organized a discussion on that specific topic in the course of the Council consultations. The turnout of heads of missions at that meeting was very low, which indicates clearly their real level of interest in resolving this issue of their own creation. All we heard from our French colleagues during consultations, as well as today, is a repetition of their thesis that the NATO aggression against Yugoslavia is an issue concerning the distant past, which does not merit wasting the Council's time.

Simply put, today we clearly saw once again that France, the United Kingdom and the United States do not want the Security Council to discuss this extremely inconvenient issue for them regarding the NATO aggression against a sovereign state, in this case Yugoslavia.

All of this is already clear to everyone. There is no need to try to hide behind a very unconvincing argument about the supposed purely historical nature of this issue. The situation in Kosovo and the implementation — or rather the non-implementation — of resolution 1244 (1999), are under active consideration by the Security Council. There is an objective reason for that: the situation in the region is rapidly deteriorating because Western colleagues basically gave the Kosovo authorities carte blanche to carry out atrocities against the Serbian population. The Western States themselves are flagrantly violating the resolution. As recently as yesterday, 27 March, the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recommended that Kosovo be invited for membership in the Council of Europe, despite the fact that resolution 1244 (1999) confirms that Kosovo is part of a sovereign State and United Nations member — Serbia.

I would like to ask my colleagues — can this already be considered an issue of the past that the Security Council should not discuss? Or did those decisions taken by the Council of Europe, which are at odds with a Security Council resolution and are a direct continuation of the brutal and destructive Western stance on the Balkans, become part of history as soon as they were adopted? Just as NATO ignored the Security Council in 1999, when they launched an illegal aggression against sovereign Yugoslavia, today members of the NATO are going to any lengths to prevent the truth about their crimes from being heard in the Chamber.

Let me ask the Permanent Representative of France — Is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is as old as the United Nations, not a historical issue, in his view? Are the Six-Day War, the events of 1973 and the Council's resolutions from those years not factors that influence the Council's discussion of this topic? In the light of the statements made by the representative of the United States about the non-binding nature of Council decisions, we would not be surprised if the representative of France also said that they were not. I think that everyone here is eager to know at what moment in time, according to his classification that he is imposing on the Council, a subject on the Council's agenda becomes a matter of the past. Or is he demanding that any case that is inconvenient for France and its NATO allies be automatically seen as obsolete? Behind all that lies the real reason for his anxiety. Back then, no NATO leaders were held accountable for the aggression. The representative of France is now simply afraid that the issue will resurface. That is why he is engaging in verbal ploys and procedural juggling to prevent the Council from discussing it.

Today is a good occasion to recall the responsibility of politicians of NATO States, because exactly 25 years ago, on 28 March 1999, the President of the United States, after a meeting with the leaders of the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Italy, confirmed the decision to intensify military strikes against Yugoslavia. That was followed by more than two more months of NATO bombings, which killed more than 2,000 civilians and injured more than 12,000.

Against that backdrop, all attempts to hide behind Council procedure look doubly hypocritical. We have already repeatedly explained our position on the fact that, on 25 March, the Japanese presidency put to a procedural vote an issue that did not constitute the

essence of the disagreement. We also regret that, by acting in such a way, the presidency assigned itself a purely technical role, while it certainly has a political responsibility when it comes to scheduling meetings.

I would also like to note that, on 25 March, France, the United Kingdom and the United States challenged our choice of a traditional agenda item that is directly related to the Council's mandate, namely, "Threats to international peace and security". I gather that today France is putting to the vote another item that we have proposed, namely, "Maintenance of international peace and security". I think that one can hardly say that the situation in Kosovo, the root cause of which was NATO's aggression against Yugoslavia, has nothing to do with international peace and security. I urge non-permanent members of the Security Council to think about how it would make them look if they did not support the Council's discussion of that item.

**Mr. Wood** (United States of America): Let me brief members on the position of the United States.

As we just heard, the representative of the Russian Federation has claimed that some members of the Security Council are engaged in procedural juggling. On the contrary, it has been baffling how Russia has persisted with these ludicrous procedural arguments. These procedural issues are well-settled and established practice. Russia knows better. After all, Russia itself has called procedural votes on the adoption of the agenda. That is all public record.

Many of us here remember when Russia called a vote on the provisional agenda on 31 January 2022 (see S/PV.8960) to prevent the Council from discussing the build-up of hundreds of thousands of Russia's troops along the border with Ukraine. Then, the President of the Security Council framed the question on the procedural vote in line with existing and established practice, exactly as the Japanese presidency did this week. Russia did not take the floor to request a reframing of the question. It did not question the actions of the President at that 2022 meeting. It did not do so because Russia understood and was following established practice, as was everyone else. A vote can be called on the adoption of the provisional agenda, and nine votes are always needed for the adoption of the agenda. What was true this week was also true at the 2022 meeting. Russia's protests today, as they have been for the past few days, are not about rules. We are witnessing, plain and simple, a tantrum. Russia did

not get its way and did not listen to the concerns of other Council members. It is now twisting established practice and rules so that they apply only when it suits Russia. It is right out of the old Soviet Russia playbook.

We hope that Russia will cease and desist its blatant deviation from our rules and established practice. But if it insists on calling votes for every meeting, we expect that, for the sake of consistency, it will also call votes on its own meetings.

**Mr. De Rivière** (France) (*spoke in French*): I will be very brief. I would first like to say that, regarding Kosovo, I completely agree with the opinion of the First Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia, which is that the subject is still on the agenda. The best proof of that is that a meeting is scheduled for April under the Maltese presidency and that the parties themselves — Serbia and Kosovo — will be invited, which will give us an opportunity to talk about the matter in an up-to-date manner and to try to make further progress towards a resolution of that process.

Secondly, I think that we could draw out this discussion forever, and I would therefore invite you, Mr. President, to put the agenda to the vote.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Very briefly, I want to thank my American colleague, who got overanxious for some reason, for illustrating that our Western colleagues are prepared to go back in history as much as they want, but only when they see fit. Otherwise, they are not prepared to do so.

**The President:** In view of the request made by a member of the Council, I intend to put the provisional agenda to the vote.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the provisional agenda for today's meeting. I shall put the provisional agenda to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Algeria, China, Guyana, Mozambique, Russian Federation, Sierra Leone

*Against:*

None

*Abstaining:*

Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

**The President:** The provisional agenda received 6 votes in favour, none against and 9 abstentions. The provisional agenda is not adopted having failed to obtain the required number of votes.

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

**Mr. Kanu** (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone voted in favour of adopting the provisional agenda of this meeting in recognition of the right accorded to members of the Security Council to request a meeting of the Council and in line with rule 9 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure. Furthermore, under rule 2 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, the President shall call a meeting of the Security Council at the request of any member of the Security Council.

We note Article 35 of the Charter of the United Nations and the practice of the Council to allow for discussions on any issue that has implications for the maintenance of international peace and security. In ensuring that we maintain a practice of consistency and transparency, we are aligned with the views that will allow for member States to be given the opportunity to speak on issues in the appropriate format.

We conclude by stating that it is our sincere hope that the members of the Security Council can come together and find common ground on the issue of holding a procedural vote before every meeting. In our view, the Charter, provisional the rules of procedure and the practice of the Council effectively guide us on how we work and how we should continue to work for the global good.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to thank all those who supported us in the voting today. There are many more of us, which means that our arguments are being heard. In addition, I cannot fail to note that today's vote confirmed the point that we have been raising in the context of Security Council reform when we say that Western countries are overrepresented on the Council. What we saw today is the best possible illustration of that point.

We regret that the Council, at the behest of the Western troika, has been bogged down in a very unfavourable situation. It essentially refused to discuss its own agenda item, "Maintenance of international

peace and security”, just now. In other words, Security Council members declined to implement their own mandate. That is a very serious blow to the reputation of this body of ours. France, the United Kingdom and the United States sacrificed the Council’s reputation for their own interests by doing everything possible to avoid discussing the illegal NATO aggression against the sovereign State of Yugoslavia.

But I will disappoint them when I say that, while they can resort to any kind of procedural manipulation to block one, or even two, Security Council meetings, doing so will not wipe out the consequences of their destructive actions: thousands of dead and maimed civilians, soil contaminated by depleted uranium, an exponential growth in cancer cases — which, according to specialists, will haunt the next 60 generations in the Balkans — and a NATO-made hotspot in the heart of Europe that can explode at any moment.

In that connection, I would like to quote former United States Senator and incumbent United States President Joe Biden as he spoke in Congress back in 1999:

“I was suggesting we bomb Belgrade. I was suggesting that we send American pilots in and blow up all the bridges on the Drina. I was suggesting we take out his oil supplies. I was suggesting very specific action”.

I hope that Security Council colleagues realize that the more that they try to hide the inconvenient truth, the more widely it will be disseminated. In these days, the whole world has seen that those countries are terrified of so much as a hint of open discussion of their illegal aggression against sovereign countries, which have been numerous over the past two decades. After Yugoslavia, they invaded Iraq, Syria, Libya and Afghanistan, leaving a trail of death and destruction everywhere. And if they have managed to avoid talking about that topic in the Security Council so far, they should not expect to avoid responsibility for their actions just as easily.

**Mr. Geng Shuang** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Today the Security Council held another procedural vote on whether to convene an open meeting on the twenty-fifth anniversary of NATO’s bombing campaign against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We find the situation and the result of the voting disappointing

and regrettable. At a similar vote on Monday (see S/PV.9587), I made known our position, namely, that China supports a Council meeting to review the lessons of, and reflect upon, that important episode in history, and, on that basis, to consider, discuss and debate the question of how to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, practice true multilateralism, advocate and promote equity and justice and maintain international peace and security under the current circumstances.

The past few days saw some disagreements among Council members over meeting arrangements, which have caused some disruptions to the Council’s workflow. That is not something any of us wanted, or is it in anybody’s interest. Right now, international peace and security are faced with grim challenges, and the Council’s agenda is exceptionally heavy. It is inevitable that different members hold different positions and views on conflicts and disputes, but the least we can do is maintain cooperation among ourselves, to the extent possible, on procedural matters. That is the only way to keep the Council functioning as mandated. We encourage certain members to show flexibility and seek proper solutions to any issues through positive engagement in consultations. In that regard, the Council’s Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions has a role to play.

**The President:** Before adjourning, since today is the last scheduled working day of the United Nations for this month, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of Japan to the members of the Council and the secretariat of the Council for all the support they have given us.

Indeed, it has been a busy month, and one in which we rallied to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone and without the hard work, support and positive contributions of every delegation and the representatives of the Secretariat. We also thank the technical support team, conference service officers, interpreters, verbatim reporters and security staff.

As we end our presidency, I know I speak on behalf of the Council in wishing the delegation of Malta good luck in the month of April.

*The meeting rose at 3.25 p.m.*