

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 20 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of
the Republic of Korea to the United Nations addressed to the
President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of the Republic of Korea in June 2024 (see annex).^{*} The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations. While other members of the Council have been consulted, it should not be considered a consensus document.

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

(Signed) Joonkook **Hwang**
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations

^{*} Circulated in the language of submission only.



Annex to the letter dated 20 May 2025 from the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea 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 Korea (June 2024)

Introduction

In June 2024, under the presidency of the Republic of Korea, the Security Council had a full and active schedule, holding a total of 44 meetings, including 31 public meetings, 2 private meetings, 9 informal consultations (including regarding the adoption of the programme of work) and 2 Arria-formula meetings. The Council adopted eight resolutions (relating to Gaza, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen, the Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, terrorism and the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals) and one presidential statement (on the protection of civilians in armed conflict), and also issued two press statements (one on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and another on terrorism).

Throughout the month, the Council held intensive discussions on various important and pressing issues, including matters relating to the Middle East, Africa, Ukraine and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

In its capacity as the President of the Security Council, the Republic of Korea hosted one signature event, a high-level open debate on addressing evolving threats in cyberspace, which was held on 20 June and chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, Cho Tae-yul. The debate, held under the item "Maintenance of international peace and security", reflected the commitment of the Republic of Korea to contributing to a safer cyberspace. The event served as a platform for nearly 70 speakers to identify key challenges in cyberspace, share national experiences and discuss the role of the Council in addressing the growing use of rapidly advancing technology by both State and non-State actors in pursuit of troubling objectives.

In addition, elections were held on 6 June, resulting in the election of Philemon Yang of Cameroon as the President for the seventy-ninth session of the General Assembly, and the election of Denmark, Greece, Panama, Pakistan and Somalia as non-permanent members of the Security Council for the term 2025–2026. On 27 June, Serge Brammertz of Belgium was reappointed as Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals for a two-year term, from 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2026.

Middle East

Iraq

On 5 June, the Security Council held a briefing on the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), ahead of the expiry of the Team's mandate in September 2024. The Acting Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, Ana Peyró Llopis, briefed the Council on the Team's ongoing drawdown, with a complete withdrawal from Iraq expected by 17 September 2024. She also highlighted the achievements of UNITAD, including the excavation of mass graves, the digitization of records relating to Da'esh, and the provision of assistance with

respect to third-State prosecutions. She stressed that Iraq would continue to play a crucial role in ensuring accountability for the crimes committed by Da'esh.

Most of the members of the Security Council commended UNITAD for the work it had carried out since its establishment in 2017, highlighting its close cooperation with relevant stakeholders, including members of the judiciary, victims and witnesses in Iraq. A few others underlined the systematic failure of previous leaders of UNITAD to ensure that the Team fulfilled its mandate. They also explored ways to continue the search for justice after the dissolution of the Team.

Situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 10 June, the Security Council adopted resolution [2735 \(2024\)](#), in which it welcomed a proposed three-phase ceasefire deal for Gaza after 247 days of conflict and urged full implementation of the terms by both Israel and Hamas. The deal provides for the implementation of such immediate measures as a complete ceasefire, the release of hostages and humanitarian aid, followed by a permanent end to hostilities and the reconstruction of Gaza and, finally, long-term stabilization.

On 25 June, the Security Council held a briefing on the implementation of resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#). The United Nations Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General to the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Palestinian Authority, Tor Wennesland, detailed settlement expansion in the West Bank, criticized Israeli policies affecting Palestinian financial stability, condemned the devastating impact of hostilities on civilians in Gaza, and stressed that aid access was a humanitarian imperative.

Council members discussed the ongoing situation in Gaza, as well as the escalating tensions between Israel and Hizbullah along the Blue Line, emphasizing the urgent need for a viable political solution.

Syrian Arab Republic

On 11 June, the Security Council held a briefing on the cooperation of the Syrian Arab Republic with the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, highlighted the fact that, while some progress had been made in resolving a few outstanding issues regarding the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic, 17 critical issues remained unresolved, including concerns about undeclared chemical weapons activities and the presence of unexpected chemicals at declared sites. She emphasized the importance of the Syrian Arab Republic fully cooperating with OPCW to close these gaps and ensure compliance with international obligations.

Many members of the Security Council reiterated the importance of ensuring the full compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, emphasizing the need for continued cooperation with OPCW to resolve all outstanding issues related to the chemical weapons programme in the Syrian Arab Republic. They also condemned the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances and stressed the necessity of holding those responsible for such acts accountable. Some members called for the technical nature of OPCW to be upheld.

On 25 June, the Security Council held a briefing on political and humanitarian issues relating to the Syrian Arab Republic. The Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Najat Rochdi, highlighted the urgent need to address the suffering of Syrians, ensure unimpeded humanitarian access and advance a political process, facilitated by the United Nations, to restore the sovereignty and unity of the

Syrian Arab Republic. The Director of the Coordination Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Ramesh Rajasingham, underscored the severe deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, underlining critical funding shortfalls and the urgent need for sustained humanitarian access.

Security Council members emphasized the critical need for a sustainable political solution in the Syrian Arab Republic, calling for the implementation of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and advocating the resumption of the work of the Constitutional Committee. They also stressed the importance of ensuring unhindered humanitarian access, extending cross-border aid operations and addressing the urgent humanitarian needs of the Syrian people.

The Security Council held its regular consultations on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on 13 June. On 27 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2737 \(2024\)](#), in which it extended the mandate of UNDOF for an additional six months until 31 December and requested that the Secretary-General ensure that UNDOF personnel were adequately equipped to fulfil their duties safely.

Yemen

On 13 June, the Security Council convened for a briefing followed by consultations on Yemen. The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, and the Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Edem Wosornu, briefed the Council. The Head of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement and Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, Michael Beary, participated in consultations only. Yemen joined the briefing under rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure.

The Special Envoy for Yemen highlighted the urgent need to address the arbitrary detention by the Houthis of 13 United Nations personnel, as well as five staff members from international non-governmental organizations and a representative of Yemeni civil society. He also warned that retaliatory actions by the Houthis and the Central Bank of Yemen could have a severe impact on the economy and potentially lead to military escalation. The Director of Operations and Advocacy of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs called for the immediate release of the detainees, including United Nations staff, and cautioned that recent directives by the Houthis and the Yemeni Government, such as potential restrictions on banking through the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system, could further harm the economy of Yemen and exacerbate poverty and food insecurity.

Most members of the Security Council emphasized the need for the immediate release of detainees, including United Nations personnel, and called for increased humanitarian relief efforts, expressing concerns about the worsening humanitarian and economic conditions. Many members urged the Houthis to cease attacks on commercial and merchant vessels. In addition, some members expressed concern that the ongoing escalation of the conflict in Gaza could affect the peace process in Yemen.

On 27 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2739 \(2024\)](#), extending until 15 January 2025 its request to the Secretary-General to provide written monthly reports on any further Houthi attacks on merchant and commercial vessels in the Red Sea. The Council also reiterated its demand that the Houthis immediately cease all attacks against merchant and commercial vessels and release the MV *Galaxy Leader* and its crew.

Africa

Central African region

On 10 June, the Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the Central African region. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), Abdou Abarry, highlighted positive political developments in some countries while underscoring security concerns caused by armed groups and terrorists, and the threat posed by climate change to stability and development. The President of the Commission of the Economic Community of Central African States, Gilberto da Piedade Verissimo, also briefed the Council on the fragile situation in the region, including the wide-ranging humanitarian crisis and the negative consequences of climate change, and asked the Security Council to devote its full attention to the region. Council members commended political progress in some countries, while also recognizing the substantial political, economic and social challenges facing the region. The majority of members explicitly advocated the extension of the mandate of UNOCA until August 2027.

Sudan

On 13 June, the Security Council adopted resolution [2736 \(2024\)](#), in which it demanded an immediate halt to the siege of El Fasher, in the Sudan, by the Rapid Support Forces and called for the cessation of hostilities and de-escalation across North Darfur. The Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [1591 \(2005\)](#) concerning the Sudan, Joonkook Hwang, reported on the work of the Committee, including the appointment of new experts and the latest work of the Panel of Experts. The majority of Council members expressed grave concern over external interference fuelling conflict in Darfur and emphasized the importance of monitoring and enforcing the arms embargo in order to maintain regional stability.

On 18 June, the Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the Sudan, emphasizing the imminent threat of famine amid the escalating conflict. The Director of Operations and Advocacy at OCHA described a dire situation in which 800,000 lives were at stake and there was widespread displacement. She stressed the fact that over 2 million people faced catastrophic hunger unless immediate action was taken. The Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Martha Ama Akyaa Pobee, underscored the failure to halt the violence, particularly in El Fasher, despite recent Security Council resolutions. The Senior Programme Director at the Sudan Family Planning Association, Limiaa Ahmed, who was also a civil society briefer, highlighted the dire situation of women and girls, as well as their contribution to humanitarian efforts. The majority of Council members urged the warring parties in the Sudan to immediately cease hostilities and stressed the importance of protecting civilians and ensuring unhindered humanitarian access. Some members called for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Sudan to be respected and underscored the neutrality and impartiality of international humanitarian organizations.

Libya

On 19 June, the Security Council held a briefing and informal consultation on the situation in Libya. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs in the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Stephanie Koury, used her briefing to draw attention to the stalemate in the political process, as well as security concerns. At the same time, she welcomed the start of

voter registration for municipal elections in the country. Council members expressed their concerns about the inability of key players to reach consensus on a road map for the political process and their support for the mandate of UNSMIL to assist with the political process in Libya. Libya also joined the briefing under rule 37 of the Security Council's provisional rules of procedure.

Somalia

On 24 June, the Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in Somalia. The Acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), James Swan, highlighted progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia, including its multifaceted efforts to defeat Al-Shabaab and counter terrorist threats. He stressed that the financing of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) remained a critical challenge and urged all partners to ensure predictable and sustainable funding. He also reported on his discussion with the Federal Government of Somalia regarding the transition of UNSOM. The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of ATMIS, Mohamed El-Amine Souef, also emphasized that sustained support from international partners was essential in order to maintain the momentum of Somalia in countering Al-Shabaab. He welcomed the endorsement by the African Union of a new mission, which was to be led by the African Union and aligned with the security arrangements that would follow ATMIS. Council members commended Somalia for its progress and welcomed its election to the Security Council for the term 2025–2026. They also underlined the importance of preserving hard-won security gains in order to avoid gaps and voiced concern over the dire humanitarian situation.

On 28 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2741 \(2024\)](#), in which it extended the authorization of ATMIS and the support provided by the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) until 12 August 2024. In the resolution, it also authorized a drawdown of 2,000 ATMIS personnel by 30 June, reducing the size of the mission to 12,626 uniformed personnel. The Council, through this resolution, also encouraged the African Union Commission to develop an agreed concept of operations by 31 July 2024 for a peace support operation led by the African Union to follow ATMIS. It also signalled its intention to review this concept of operations and the next steps in a subsequent resolution.

Central African Republic

On 27 June, the Security Council held a briefing and consultations on the situation in the Central African Republic. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Valentine Rugwabiza, reported that the Mission had launched the first high-level conference on peaceful transhumance, improved ground access to territories inaccessible during the rainy season, expanded its operation to Mboki in the Haut-Mbomou Prefecture, provided logistical support in relation to the deployment of the security forces of the Central African Republic to the Vakaga Prefecture and supported preparations for the first local elections to be held in over three decades. In contrast, she expressed concern over continuous misinformation and disinformation campaigns targeting MINUSCA, which made the operational environment of the Mission more complicated. Members of the Security Council welcomed the Government's efforts to decentralize the peace process and its commitment to organizing local elections. They also expressed concern over the fragile security situation in border areas.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

On 20 June, the Security Council issued a press statement on the situation in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In the press statement, the Council strongly condemned attacks in that area, expressed concern about their impact, called for diplomatic dialogue on de-escalation, and reaffirmed its commitment to the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

On 27 June, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2738 \(2024\)](#), in which it renewed the sanctions regime with respect to the Democratic Republic of the Congo until 1 July 2025 and the mandate of the Group of Experts until 1 August 2025. In the resolution, under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, the Council reaffirmed that the measures on arms no longer applied to the supply, sale or transfer of arms and related material, or to the provision of any assistance, advice or training related to the military activities of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Monthly Assessment of the Presidency of the Republic of Korea – June 2024

Europe

Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine

On 7 June, the Security Council held a briefing under the item “Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine”. The Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Joyce Msuya, highlighted the alarming escalation of violence in Ukraine, particularly in Kharkiv, where, in May 2024, the highest civilian casualties since June 2023 were witnessed. She highlighted the severe impact on the elderly and continued attacks on critical infrastructure, stressing that the humanitarian needs in Ukraine remain vast and will have long-term consequences.

On 14 June, the Security Council held a briefing under the item “Threats to international peace and security”. The Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, emphasized the imperative of achieving peace in Ukraine, stressing that any transfer of weapons must comply with international law and Security Council resolutions. She highlighted the severe humanitarian toll of the conflict, with over 11,000 civilians killed and stressed the need for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions.

On 18 June, the Security Council convened a briefing under the item “Maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine”. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, stated in her briefing that civilian casualties have surged due to intensified attacks by the Russian Federation, notably in Kharkiv and Vovchansk. She mentioned that the recent Summit on Peace in Ukraine, convened by Switzerland, garnered global support for initiatives like nuclear safety, food security and humanitarian issues, amid a staggering estimated cost of \$486 billion for reconstruction. She added that, with only 27 per cent of the 2024 humanitarian response plan funded, the United Nations urged sustained financial backing while stressing the urgent need for the Russian Federation to permit humanitarian access.

The Security Council members delivered their respective positions on the situation in Ukraine. Ukraine participated in all three meetings, while the European Union and some European countries participated in the meetings on 7 and 18 June.

Asia

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

On 12 June, the Security Council held a briefing on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Council was briefed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Elizabeth Salmón, and a representative of civil society, Gumhyok Kim. Two Council members expressed their opposition to holding this briefing. A procedural vote was conducted accordingly on the adoption of the provisional agenda where 12 members voted in favour, 2 voted against and 1 abstained.

During the briefing, the High Commissioner pointed out different tactics of severe repression carried out by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on its people and called for the international community to explore avenues for accountability, while noting the potential engagement of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with the international human rights system, including the upcoming universal periodic review in November. The Special Rapporteur emphasized increasing security tensions on the Korean Peninsula driven by the continued prioritization of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea of its military, nuclear and missile programs, while echoing the need for international efforts toward halting the ongoing state of tensions and impunity within the country. Gumhyok Kim, a defector of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pointed out that all of the problems emerging from Democratic People's Republic of Korea come from the ideology of the regime and called upon the international community to increase accountability efforts and support the right to information of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Many Council members recalled the tenth anniversary of the report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and emphasized the inextricable linkage between Democratic People's Republic of Korea human rights and its weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, thus highlighting the need for the Council to continue to address the systematic violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Some Council members opposed the use of human rights agenda against a sovereign Member State for political interests. They noted that such a one-sided approach exacerbates the tensions in the region and diverts the focus of the Council from the goal to restore peace and reconciliation.

Prior to the briefing, the Republic of Korea, on behalf of 57 Member States and the European Union, delivered a joint statement at a media stakeout on the human rights situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, calling upon all States Members of the United Nations to join in taking action to bring concrete change that improves the welfare of people in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and contributes to a more peaceful and secure world.

On 28 June, the Security Council held a briefing that addressed ongoing concerns over Pyongyang's nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, which are seen as undermining global disarmament efforts. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, highlighted Pyongyang's numerous missile launches and recent activities since 2022, stressing the need for compliance with international laws on arms transfers. The Executive Director of Conflict Armament Research, Jonah Leff,

made a presentation on the allegations of the transfer of ballistic missiles and ammunition from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the Russian Federation.

Most Council members highlighted the cases of unlawful arms transfer and the dissolution of the Panel of Experts, while others warned about the increased tension and military alliance buildup in the Asia-Pacific region. A few Council members emphasized the connection between the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and heightened military activities, including joint military exercises in the region.

Afghanistan

On 21 June, the Security Council held a quarterly briefing on the situation in Afghanistan. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Roza Otunbayeva, briefed ongoing concerns on wide range of issues such as poverty, human rights, governance and climate change. The Special Representative reiterated the need for coordinated international engagement ahead of the third meeting of special envoys on Afghanistan to be held in Doha, stressing that engagement is not legitimization or normalization. The Director of the Financing and Partnerships Division of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Lisa Doughten, highlighted the dire humanitarian situation and operational challenges faced by humanitarian organizations on the ground. A civil society representative, Manizha Wafeq, urged the reversal of all restrictions on Afghan women's rights and provided recommendations for supporting the participation of Afghan women in the economy.

The Council members reaffirmed the common goal of reaching an end state of an Afghanistan at peace with itself and its neighbours, fully reintegrated into the international community and meeting its international obligations. Concerns were expressed including on the humanitarian crisis, situation of women and girls, terrorism and narcotics. The representatives of Afghanistan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan also participated in the meeting.

Thematic issues

Women and peace and security

As a signatory of the shared commitments on women and peace and security, the Republic of Korea has integrated gender perspectives into Security Council discussions throughout its presidency and invited women civil society briefers to ensure gender-balanced representation. In particular, the Republic of Korea designated the Sudan briefing held on 18 June as a women and peace and security-focused meeting, highlighting critical issues including sexual violence and other human rights violations against women, accountability and women's participation in political and peace processes in the Sudan. The Republic of Korea also held a joint press stakeout with the other 10 Council members of the shared commitments, and invited a woman civil society breifer to the Council who provided on-the-ground insights.

Climate, peace and security

The nexus between climate change, peace and security continued to be raised in numerous Council discussions, including those related to Central African region, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Afghanistan. The Republic of Korea led a joint press stakeout of 11 pledgers of the joint pledges related to climate, peace and

security during the UNAMA briefing held on 21 June, highlighting the adverse impacts of climate change on peace and security in Afghanistan.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts

On 10 June, the Security Council adopted resolution [2734 \(2024\)](#), which updates criteria for listing individuals, groups and entities to include acts of sexual and gender-based violence as terrorist tactics. The resolution also extends the mandate of the Ombudsperson to independently review requests for delisting. In addition, the resolution extends the mandate of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team.

International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals

On 11 June, the Security Council convened to discuss the activities of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, which oversees cases related to war crimes committed in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. The President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Graciela Gatti Santana, highlighted that while the tribunal has transitioned into a residual institution after concluding its final core criminal cases, it still requires significant resources and state cooperation to complete its remaining substantial and unprecedented responsibilities. The Chief Prosecutor of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Serge Brammertz, emphasized that although all fugitives indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda have been accounted for, ongoing work is needed to continue the pursuit of justice and uphold the Council's vision to combat impunity for severe violations of humanitarian law.

Most Security Council members acknowledged the transition of the International Residual Mechanism to a residual institution while emphasizing the ongoing need for accountability, justice, and the preservation of its legacy. They stressed the importance of continued support, efficient resource management, and cooperation among States to ensure that the Mechanism fulfils its remaining responsibilities effectively.

On 27 June, the Security Council adopted resolution [2740 \(2024\)](#). The resolution reappointed the Mechanism's Prosecutor for a further two years. It also requested the Mechanism and the Secretary-General to submit reports on the way forward, including options for the transfer of functions and possible locations for the archives.

Tolerance

On 14 June, the Security Council convened a briefing on intolerance and hate speech as drivers of conflicts, as mandated by resolution [2686 \(2023\)](#). The Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, briefed the Council on the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, highlighting the efforts of United Nations missions to address this issue. She also expressed concern over the rising trend of hate speech, which can trigger violence and contribute to the outbreak, escalation and recurrence of conflicts. She emphasized that tackling hate speech should never be used to stifle freedom of expression. Many Council members underscored the importance of protecting fundamental freedoms for all and promoting human rights, while condemning all forms of violence, discrimination and hate speech. Some members also stressed the need to ensure gender equality, women's participation and the protection of freedom of expression.

Cybersecurity

On 20 June, the Council held an open debate chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, Cho Tae-yul, on threats in cyberspace. Mr. Cho emphasized the importance of leveraging digital technology for global advancement while prioritizing human welfare and environmental protection. The Secretary-General underscored that despite the benefits of instant connectivity and economic growth facilitated by technology, vulnerabilities such as ransomware attacks highlight significant risks to peace and stability. Calls were made for international cooperation and Security Council engagement to establish norms and enhance cybersecurity worldwide, underlining the imperative to integrate cyber-related considerations into broader peace and security efforts. Sixty-three Member States and the European Union joined a press stakeout with a joint statement which expressed deep concern about malicious use of information and communications technologies, such as cyberattack on critical infrastructure and illicit cyberactivities related to the development of weapons of mass destruction, emphasizing that the Security Council has a key role to play in addressing cyber threats.

Non-proliferation

On 24 June, the Security Council held a briefing on non-proliferation. The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, highlighted concerns over the significant increase in enriched uranium stockpiles by the Islamic Republic of Iran, which surpass the agreed limits under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. Voices of concern were raised that restoring the nuclear deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran to its full and effective implementation remain elusive.

Children and armed conflict

On 26 June, the Security Council held its annual open debate on children and armed conflict. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba, highlighted a troubling rise in grave violations against children in armed conflicts worldwide in 2023, documenting over 32,000 verified violations. Those included numerous cases of killing and maiming, as well as attacks on schools and hospitals. She explained the new listings of parties committing grave violations against children in the annexes of the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and expressed her intention to continue engagement through action plans and preventive measures.

The Deputy Executive Director of Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations at the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Ted Chaiban, reported that the United Nations had verified the highest-ever number of grave violations against children under the children and armed conflict mandate, calling for the Security Council's support for the monitoring and reporting mechanism. Former United Nations Secretary-General and Deputy Chair of The Elders, Ban Ki-moon, emphasized that the trauma children endure in armed conflict cannot be captured in statistics alone, drawing from his own experience during the Korean War. He urged Council members to uphold their responsibility to protect and support the children and armed conflict agenda. A child briefer from the Democratic Republic of the Congo shared his personal experience of abduction and recruitment by armed groups, urging the Council to take more proactive measures to protect children.

Many Security Council members expressed serious concern about the rising number of grave violations against children and emphasized the need to safeguard and apply existing tools as well as develop additional tools within the framework of the children and armed conflict agenda. Eighty speakers, including over 70 United Nations Member States participated in this meeting.

Protection of civilians

On 28 June, the Security Council adopted a Statement by the President, expressing serious concern over a rise in missing persons during armed conflicts. Noting the anniversary of key international conventions related to the protection of civilians in conflict, the Council emphasized the urgent need for member States to intensify efforts to safeguard civilians.
