



Security Council

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Letter dated 27 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia 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 for the month of August 2020 during the presidency of the Republic of Indonesia (see annex).

The assessment was prepared by the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations, following consultations with other members of the Council.

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

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Ambassador



Annex to the letter dated 27 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Indonesia (August 2020)

Introduction

Under the presidency of Indonesia in August 2020, the Security Council held 12 open meetings (including two in-person briefings), as well as 12 closed meetings (including two in-person consultations) and five closed consultations under the item “Other matters”.

The Council adopted four resolutions: on women in peacekeeping operations; the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL); the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM); and Mali sanctions. It agreed upon two press statements, on the attack in Jalalabad, Afghanistan, and on the situation in Mali, as well as press elements on Yemen. Signature events of the presidency of Indonesia were two open videoconferences, on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts: linkage between terrorism and transnational organized crime” and “Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace”.

In accordance with the Organization’s practice, Indonesia began its presidency with the presentation of the provisional programme of work of the Security Council for the month, which was adopted at the Council’s closed videoconference on 3 August 2020.

Africa

Guinea-Bissau

On 10 August, the Council held a briefing, followed by closed consultations, on Guinea-Bissau. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS), Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, presented the most recent report on Guinea-Bissau and the activities of UNIOGBIS ([S/2020/755](#)).

The Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil, João Genésio de Almeida Filho, also briefed the Council, in his capacity as Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, as did the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Ghada Fathi Waly.

The briefers highlighted the importance of unwavering international support to maintain the fragile stability achieved in Guinea-Bissau. The Special Representative also outlined the steps taken by UNIOGBIS for its phased drawdown and handover of tasks to the United Nations country team. She emphasized the crucial peacebuilding works of the country team and regional actors beyond the UNIOGBIS exit at the end of 2020, as mandated by the Council.

The Chair of the Guinea-Bissau configuration described the works of the Peacebuilding Commission with other partners to promote economic recovery in Guinea-Bissau; while the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime called for urgent and coordinated action to combat drug trafficking and trafficking in persons.

Council members reiterated, among other things, the importance of implementing the Conakry Agreement on the Implementation of the Economic Community of West African States Road Map for the Resolution of the Political Crisis in Guinea-Bissau and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) road map. They also stressed the need for the parties to the Agreement to ease tensions, and for partners to assist in peacebuilding efforts and in combating drug trafficking and transnational organized crime.

Somalia

On 20 August, the Council held a briefing on Somalia, followed by closed consultations. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia, James Swan, and the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Francisco Madeira (via videoconference), briefed the Council. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General presented the most recent report on Somalia (S/2020/798).

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General reiterated the importance for federal and state leaders of agreeing on election modalities and building the capacity of national security forces in the light of the transfer of security responsibilities in 2021. He also highlighted the upsurge in Al-Shabaab attacks and stressed the need to update the transition plan and accelerate force generation.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia reiterated the commitment of the African Union to continue to support the political process and highlighted the role of AMISOM police in election security. He also stressed the importance of building the capacity of Somali security forces to be able to take over areas currently under AMISOM control.

Council members reiterated that Somalia was at a critical juncture and that the independent assessment requested by the Council in its resolution 2520 (2020) would be of crucial importance to tailoring the international support to Somalia post 2021. They stressed the need for all Somali stakeholders to reach consensus on the modalities of the elections. They condemned the attacks perpetrated by Al-Shabaab, which remained the most crucial security threat. The Council members also called for international partners' support in alleviating the humanitarian situation.

On 28 August, the Council adopted resolution 2540 (2020), renewing the mandate of UNSOM for one year.

Mali

On 19 August, the Council held a closed videoconference to discuss the developments in Mali. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, briefed the Council.

The Council discussed the latest situation in Mali, in which a mutiny by the military had led to the detention of the President, Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, and several government officials. The Under-Secretary-General outlined the turn of events, as well as the efforts by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) and by ECOWAS in response to the situation.

The Council issued a press statement expressing its concern regarding the recent developments, condemning the mutiny and urging the release of all officials detained. In the press statement, the Council also underlined the urgent need to restore constitutional order and reiterated its support for the efforts of ECOWAS and MINUSMA.

The Council adopted resolution [2541 \(2020\)](#) on 31 August, renewing the sanction measures set out in resolution [2374 \(2017\)](#) until 31 August 2021 and extending the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 30 September 2021.

Middle East

Syrian Arab Republic

On 5 August, the Council held a closed videoconference to review and discuss the implementation of its resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) on the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic. The Officer-in-charge, Office of Disarmament Affairs, Thomas Markram, briefed the Council on the eighty-second monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons ([S/2020/769](#)).

On 19 August, the Council held an open videoconference on the Syrian Arab Republic (political) and heard from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir Pedersen. The Special Envoy discussed preparations for convening the third session of the small body of the Syrian-owned, Syrian-led, United Nations-facilitated constitutional committee in Geneva. He also said that the Syrian Arab Republic needed a complete, immediate nationwide ceasefire, as called for in resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#), and to enable an all-out effort to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

On 27 August, the Council held an open videoconference to discuss the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and was briefed by the Acting Assistant-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ramesh Rajasingham. The Acting Assistant-Secretary-General highlighted the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on health services, the economic downturn, the protection of civilians, the importance of humanitarian access and the activities of humanitarian agencies in delivering aid to people in need across the Syrian Arab Republic. The members of the Security Council expressed concerns over the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and the effects of the extreme fragility of the Syrian economy, as well as the COVID-19 outbreak.

Lebanon

On 10 August, the Council held a closed videoconference meeting with UNIFIL troop-contributing countries. The Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations emphasized that UNIFIL continued to monitor the cessation of hostilities in accordance with its mandate under Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#). He said that the liaison and coordination arrangements of UNIFIL remained vital to mitigating tensions along the Blue Line. The members of the Security Council and troop-contributing countries expressed their condolences to the families of the victims of the Beirut explosions on 4 August. The troop-contributing countries also stressed the positive role of UNIFIL and supported the renewal of the UNIFIL mandate.

On 11 August, the Special Coordinator for Lebanon, Ján Kubiš, and the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations briefed the Council during a closed videoconference on Council resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) and UNIFIL. The Special Coordinator highlighted the political, socioeconomic and humanitarian situation in Lebanon, in connection with the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the wake of the Beirut explosion. The Under-Secretary-General emphasized that UNIFIL had continued to carry out its mandated tasks fully despite the challenging circumstances and referred to the letter dated 29 July from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2020/760](#)), recommending that the Council extend the mandate of UNIFIL for a further period of 12 months. The members of the

Council expressed their support for Lebanon in exiting the current crisis and in addressing the economic, security and humanitarian challenges, as well as the impact of COVID-19 facing the country, and called upon the international community, including international organizations, to do so also.

On 28 August, the Council adopted resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#) on the extension of the UNIFIL mandate for a period of 12 months until 31 August 2021.

Yemen

On 18 August, the Council held a closed videoconference, with the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, the Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Ramesh Rajasingham (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) and the Chair of the Redeployment Coordination Committee, Abhijit Guha (United Nations Mission to support the Hudaydah Agreement) as the briefers. They briefed the Security Council about their plans to make urgent progress towards the United Nations peace proposals and in tackling the international funding crisis, which was severely limiting the humanitarian response.

After the consultation, the President read out agreed press elements.

Iraq

On 16 August, the Council held an open briefing, followed by a closed consultation with the briefer, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. During the open videoconference, the Special Representative briefed the Council on, among other things, the devastating impact of COVID-19 on Iraq, which aggravated existing deep economic, social and political challenges. She went on to discuss the priorities of the new cabinet and the security situation in Iraq. The Special Representative also informed the Council that Iraqi citizens were in need of a stable, safe and secure environment and that Iraqis could not afford another cycle of escalating violence. She highlighted the fact that the Government of Iraq operated in a challenging geopolitical environment. She announced that an early election in Iraq was scheduled for 6 June 2021.

Council members welcomed the full formation of the cabinet under the leadership of the Prime Minister, Mustafa Al-Khadimi, and expressed their support for the cabinet's priorities. Members of the Security Council also discussed the negative impact of COVID-19 for post-conflict reconstruction in Iraq, the security situation and the efforts of Iraq to increase bilateral relations with its neighbours. Many Council members also discussed the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, and reiterated their support for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, including its work to provide electoral assistance in accordance with its mandate, and emphasized the sovereignty, territorial integration, unity and independence of Iraq.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 25 August 2020, the Council held an open briefing on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question, followed by a closed consultation and an open videoconference. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Nickolay Mladenov, briefed the Council (via video link) on the latest developments in the political, security and humanitarian conditions in Palestine.

The Special Coordinator highlighted the agreement reached between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. He said that the Secretary-General had welcomed the agreement, hoping that it would create an opportunity for Israeli and Palestinian

leaders to re-engage. He informed the Council about the increased tension and deteriorating security situation in Gaza, and the urgency of implementing long-term solutions for Gaza. He also informed the Council about continued demolitions and seizures of Palestinian-owned structures by Israeli authorities and a concerning increase in violence against civilians. He said that the resurgence of COVID-19 in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and in Israel continued to be a major concern. He reiterated that the United Nations remained deeply engaged and committed to working together with donors and the parties to address the needs in Gaza and the occupied West Bank.

Council members discussed developments on the ground, including the agreement reached between Israel and the United Arab Emirates. Most members also expressed concern over increased tension in Gaza and the resurgence of the COVID-19 outbreak, reiterated support for a two-State solution and called for the resumption of dialogue and negotiation. Several Council members also reiterated their support for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and urged the international community to support humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people.

During the open videoconference on the Middle East, some delegations raised questions to the President of the Council, in particular on how he would proceed with regard to the result of the bilateral consultations with members of the Council after receiving a letter from one member of the Council regarding the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (S/2020/825), dated 20 August 2020. The President responded that there was no consensus in the Council; thus the President was not in a position to take further action.

Thematic and other issues

Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006)

On 27 August, the Security Council held closed consultations to discuss the 90-day report of the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1718 (2006) concerning the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This is a regular report, pursuant to paragraph 12 (g) of resolution 1718 (2006).

The Chair briefed the Council on the activities of the Committee for the period from 30 May to 27 August 2020. Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, informal consultations of the Committee during the reporting period were held via videoconference. The Committee also continued to perform its duties through the no-objection procedure envisioned in the guidelines of the Committee.

Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts: linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime

On 6 August, the Security Council held a high-level open debate on addressing the issue of linkages between terrorism and organized crime. The meeting was presided via videoconference by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Retno L.P. Marsudi.

The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna briefed the Council and presented the findings in the report of the Secretary-General on action taken by Member States and United Nations entities to address the issue of linkages between terrorism and organized crime (S/2020/754), prepared in response to the request contained in Council resolution 2482 (2019). She also stressed that collective

responses to terrorism and organized crime were needed now more than ever before, as the COVID-19 pandemic posed new challenges to vulnerable States.

The Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, also briefed the Council, highlighted that the ability of terrorists to benefit from organized crime, whether domestic or transnational, online or offline, can exacerbate the threat posed by terrorism to international peace and security.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for the open videoconference, in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the written statements from 37 non-members of the Security Council were circulated and issued as a document of the Security Council (S/2020/791).

Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace

On 12 August, the Security Council held a high-level open debate via videoconference on “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace: pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace” (S/2020/765). The meeting was presided by the Foreign Minister of Indonesia, Retno L.P. Marsudi.

A total of 53 representatives from Member States, including at the ministerial level, the Peacebuilding Commission and the European Union, presented interventions at the open debate. Non-members of the Council made written submissions. Briefings were presented by the Secretary-General, António Guterres, the eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, and the Director of the Center on International Cooperation of New York University, Sarah Cliffe.

The Secretary-General expressed concerns over the impact of the pandemic on public trust, the global economy and democratic process. He said that, at the same time, the pandemic was creating opportunities for peace. Council resolution 2532 (2020) was a step in the right direction, but much more was needed. Responses to the pandemic must be conflict-sensitive. He stressed the importance of humanitarian, development and peace actors working in coordination.

Mr. Ban emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic had not only health consequences, but also socioeconomic and governance consequences. He stressed the need for the United Nations to increase its focus on preventing conflicts. The United Nations had a “generational opportunity” to steer humanity and the planet towards a more peaceful and sustainable future.

Ms. Cliffe described the impacts of COVID-19, including the socioeconomic consequences, rising inequality, food insecurity and the inability to convene peace processes and elections, which might pose a risk of conflict. At the same time, there were also opportunities for peacebuilding, and the Council needed to engage more closely with regional and subregional bodies, such as the African Union. In her opinion the United Nations could respond to the pandemic in humanitarian, development and peacebuilding areas.

Members of the Council stressed the need for country-sensitive peacebuilding efforts and reiterated their support for the call of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire amid the pandemic. The roles of the Peacebuilding Commission and peacekeeping missions in supporting conflict-affected countries during the pandemic were also highlighted. Several members supported the call of the Secretary-General to waive economic sanctions.

**Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts:
strategic-level report on Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh)**

On 24 August, the Security Council held an open videoconference on “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”. The participants discussed the eleventh report of the Secretary-General on the threat posed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL (Da'esh)) to international peace and security and the range of United Nations efforts in support of Member States in countering the threat ([S/2020/774](#)).

The Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, said that it was indicated in the report that COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions such as lockdowns and restrictions on movement seemed to have reduced the risk of attacks in non-conflict zones in the short term. However, the global threat from ISIL was likely to increase if the international community failed to address pressing challenges. He added that ISIL and other terrorist groups still sought to exploit the far-reaching disruption and negative socioeconomic and political impacts of the pandemic.

The Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, Michèle Coninsx, also briefed the Council. In her briefing, she summarized the activities of the Directorate and the consequences of the pandemic on the work of the Directorate. She stated that the dire situation faced by thousands of ISIL-associated women and children in the detention camps in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic remained a major challenge for the international community.

Council members agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic risked exacerbating an already untenable humanitarian, human rights and security situation and therefore stressed the importance of a united response to the challenges posed by COVID-19.

Informal wrap-up

The President of the Security Council held an open virtual informal interactive wrap-up meeting on 31 August. The Permanent Representatives of Indonesia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia briefed participants on the activities of the Security Council under the presidency of Indonesia in August.

More than 80 countries attended the briefing. In the interactive discussion that followed, countries highlighted several important issues discussed in August, including the adoption of Council resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#) on women in peacekeeping operations. Countries also expressed their appreciation of the role of non-permanent members in various Council deliberations.