



Security Council

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Letter dated 9 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the briefings provided by Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga, President of Groupe LOTUS, as well as the statements delivered by Their Excellencies Ms. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Federal Minister of Defence of Germany; Mr. Febrian Alphyanto Ruddyard, Deputy Foreign Minister for Multilateral Cooperation of Indonesia; and Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland; and by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “United Nations peacekeeping operations: Peace operations and human rights”, convened on Tuesday, 7 July 2020.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, Ecuador, the European Union, Fiji, Finland, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Italy, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, Peru, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Senegal, Slovakia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Ukraine and Uruguay.

Pursuant to the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to Permanent Representatives of Security Council members, dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the enclosed briefing and statements will be issued as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Christoph Heusgen
President of the Security Council



Annex 1**Statement by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet**

I thank the Government of Germany for convening today's debate on peace operations and human rights at a time of far-reaching challenges. As the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues to gather pace, its impacts on health, societies and economies threaten development and amplify or create new grievances and tensions.

Resolution 2532 (2020) rightly recognizes the particularly devastating impact of the pandemic on countries affected by conflict and humanitarian crises. I welcome its strong call for a global ceasefire in all situations on the Security Council's agenda. I trust that it will also spark broader and more coordinated global action to mitigate and prevent the pandemic's impact in the present and in future.

The Council has often stressed that conflict prevention must be grounded in respect for and protection of human rights. In other words, human rights are central to the Council's mandate to maintain international peace and security. This principle has been consistently implemented through the integration of human rights in the mandates of peace operations in the gravest crises threatening the world. Currently, 12 United Nations peace operations — six peacekeeping operations and six special political missions — have human rights components. These human rights components on the ground powerfully contribute to better protection; they bring missions closer to the people; they serve and foster the capacities of Governments to advance inclusive development, rule of law and peace.

In this context, the importance of the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights cannot be overemphasized. Drawing on the respective forms of expertise of different components of peace operations, the Call to Action is aimed at strengthening the collective efforts to carry out mission mandates in increasingly complex environments. The Call's proposed agenda for protection will be an important element in ensuring that human rights serve as a shared and effective basis for the United Nations system's work and in reinforcing the collective engagement, contribution and responsibility of all components of peace operations in advancing human rights.

Only action to address the human rights violations inflicted on people can prevent the recurrence of conflict. This is the work that human rights components of peace operations are mandated and trained to do — detecting and addressing the inequalities and grievances that underlie specific conflicts. As the COVID crisis deepens, challenging societies, economies and institutions in every region, the work of human rights components in supporting peace operations to deliver on their mandates and address root causes of conflict and instability is becoming even more crucial.

Monitoring and reporting by human rights components shape early warning on developments that threaten to destabilize specific situations. Today, this work includes assessment of the effectiveness and enforcement of measures designed to contain COVID-19; identification of the pandemic's impact on vulnerable groups, particularly internally displaced people, refugees and women; and assessment of the impact on specific economic, social and cultural rights. The monitoring of increases in stigmatization, discrimination and hate speech related to the pandemic, as well as conflict-related violations by all parties, is also essential to efforts to highlight, address and prevent further human rights violations.

The impartial monitoring and reporting by human rights components, together with the components' engagement with the parties to conflict, State institutions and

civil society, underpin the political good offices of every mission. In other words, human rights components have an essential role to play in contributing to peace operations' overall objectives of supporting political and peace processes.

We see this dynamic in peace operations across the world. In Afghanistan, the reporting on the protection of civilians by the human rights component of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has helped to build the UNAMA's role as a credible and impartial interlocutor and opened doors with parties to the conflict. The Mission recently called on all parties to redouble their efforts to protect civilians and de-escalate the conflict, in order to save lives and create an environment conducive to success in the upcoming peace talks.

In the Central African Republic, human rights staff have demonstrated their importance to conflict prevention, notably through their work on hate speech and support for judicial and non-judicial mechanisms for accountability, including the innovative mechanism of the Special Criminal Court.

In Libya, accountability mechanisms for addressing past violations and for preventing ongoing ones are essential to following up on the Berlin process and to addressing ongoing conflict and lawlessness. The adoption by the Human Rights Council of a fact-finding mission is an example of the support that human rights mechanisms can bring to accountability and conflict-prevention efforts.

In South Sudan, the work of the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to fight impunity helps to highlight crucial gaps in accountability and the effect of those gaps in fuelling ongoing violence and impeding reconciliation efforts.

In the Sudan, the 2019 Constitutional Declaration adopted by the Transitional Government is centred on human rights. The recently established United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan, together with the local office of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in the country, will support the Government's efforts to build inclusive institutions that address the root causes of conflict and rebuild on stronger ground.

In Iraq, our monitoring and reporting on human rights violations committed since the start of the popular demonstrations in October 2019 has called attention to cases of abductions, disappearances, torture and killings of demonstrators. Together with targeted advocacy, this effort contributed to significant restraint by the security forces during the recent renewal of protests and the planned establishment of a national fact-finding committee. Consistent with the Government's acknowledgement of the need for accountability, these are important steps towards future prevention of similar acts and increasing the Iraqi people's confidence in the authorities.

Human rights staff in peace operations also assist in strengthening the capacity of national human rights and rule of law institutions. In Haiti and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Nations police and the human rights components of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) have jointly worked with national authorities to strengthen the offices of the Inspector General to address cases of human rights violations.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, support for mobile courts has led to significant progress in tackling impunity, while mobile investigation teams provide key analysis of specific situations. In Ituri, such reporting has led MONUSCO to adopt standing combat deployments to boost protection of internally displaced people. More broadly, this work underpins the Mission's conflict-prevention strategy by shaping efforts to address the root causes of conflict and intercommunal violence.

Human rights components also work to assist in managing the risks related to mandate implementation, notably by supporting implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. With the Council's support, the Policy has significantly improved the work of the United Nations on governance and security.

The Security Council has been increasingly engaged in developments at the regional level, mandating region-wide engagements to counter security threats, including those related to terrorism. In these operations, there are often increased risks for the civilian population; grounding operations in respect for human rights and international law is therefore crucial to their success.

In addition to the partnerships the OHCHR is building with the African Union, the compliance framework approach we have developed constitutes a comprehensive package of prevention, mitigation, response and remedial measures that further operationalize the work of the United Nations on the protection of civilians. We have been supporting the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5) Joint Force's operationalization of this framework since 2018, with the main objective of preventing harm to civilians during military and counter-terrorism operations.

I commend the G-5 for being the first subregional armed force committed to implementing such a compliance framework. Further efforts are needed for full operationalization, particularly by placing a strong focus on the protection of vulnerable populations, including women, children, and internally displaced people. Such measures are crucial to ensuring that the Joint Force is effective in fulfilling its mandate and in inspiring confidence in the communities it serves.

As the Secretary-General's Call to Action for Human Rights states, there is no better guarantee for prevention than for Member States to meet their human rights responsibilities. Conversely, unresolved human rights issues and underfinanced implementation of human rights recommendations result in a fragile ultimately untenable peace and force prolonged United Nations engagement in the country. At a time of multidimensional global and regional crises, we need redoubled investment in rules-based international structures that serve the common good by identifying and addressing grievances before they fester into violence. Adequate financing for Security Council human rights mandates for peace operations is among the soundest and most cost-effective investments in the interests of all.

In addition to resources, robust political support for these components, expressed through the voice of the Security Council, is needed. United Nations peace operations are among the Organization's most significant achievements and a powerful tool for protecting and promoting human rights. They need resources and the strong political support of Council members to bind together all United Nations operations around a common effective approach to crisis, from prevention to recovery.

Annex 2**Statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, David Shearer**

Madame President, it is very good to be with you. We thank you for convening us to discuss this very important topic.

Human rights is a core business for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). It is one of the four pillars in our mandate, but it also occupies a cross-cutting role right across the entire Mission, as it is central both to peace and security and to the protection of civilians.

At UNMISS, we are often looked to to provide a definitive account of human rights issues and to speak out on behalf of others about what has happened, because others will not or cannot do so. The Security Council is aware of South Sudan's poor record on human rights, particularly since the outbreak of conflict in 2013. The targeting and killing of innocent civilians has led to the displacement of over 2 million refugees and another 1.9 million displaced internally. People flee because they fear for their lives and/or the lives of their families.

Sexual violence has also been extremely prevalent in South Sudan. This is an issue that has been discussed by the Security Council, documented and highly publicized. I will not go into the details today because Council members are already well informed on them. What I would really like to address today is how the UNMISS meets and works through those challenges.

Our actions and work are tied to what we can do to make a difference, how we can change behaviour and what will bring about sustainable improvements to the observance of human rights. Of course, part of that role is to document abuse and call out violators and abusers. That is an important part of what we do, but documentation alone is not sufficient; too often it is a one-off action that makes an impact at the time of a report's release but the impact dissipates if there is no follow up.

In UNMISS, we try to structure our approach into three broad streams, which I will now go through one by one.

First, with regard to documentation and holding abusers to account, over the last couple years, we have restructured our Human Rights Division to include a rapid response team that can respond to events, provide definitive reporting on particularly relevant and topical areas, and investigate issues quickly. This is very important to the victims because their stories must be told, and their pain acknowledged and recognized, if we are to follow up promptly. Importantly, this approach also ensures that the perpetrators of abuse are identified. It also shows that we are witnesses to the abuses and are hopefully able to follow through to ensure that consequences for what happened are borne by the persons who perpetrated the abuses.

Our reporting is conservative and careful because we want to make sure that absolutely everything we do is right, that our reports can be trusted and that we will not be targeted — or our findings dismissed — because we got something wrong. We also ensure that our reports are sent to the aggrieved parties so that they have a chance to respond, and we take their response into consideration. Depending on the response, we may change our report, or we may choose not to change it. But we do give the aggrieved parties an opportunity to respond.

We have published a number of different reports on a broad range of issues, including on violations and abuses against civilians in Western Equatoria state,

particularly documenting abuses by the opposition; on indiscriminate attacks against civilians in Unity state, particularly documenting abuses largely by the Government; on threats to the freedom of expression in South Sudan; and on access to health care for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, which speaks to the right of women to gain access to services after abuse. The latter report was not just about victims but also about whether victims are able to gain access to follow-up services, including medical and psychological and social support, to help them get through their ordeals.

We have also identified and singled out individuals who have committed particular atrocities. In this regard, I would mention an individual named Gordan Kong who, in 2018, orchestrated a horrific programme of abuse in Unity state in the centre of South Sudan. When later he spoke to our Chief of Human Rights, he defended his actions saying that he had to teach people a serious lesson or they would continue to attack or insult him. That serious lesson included hanging women from trees, burning old people in their homes, raping hundreds of women across the area, and killing and displacing thousands of other people. Gordan Kong is the kind of person who should be singled out, sanctioned and prevented from getting away with this sort of abuses when they are absolutely and categorically proven to have been carried out by him.

The second issue is ending impunity and ensuring accountability. Ensuring accountability is the hallmark of all societies. Accountability means that if someone commits crimes and abuses, he or she will be tried, and if found guilty, punished. Ending impunity in South Sudan is particularly important and requires in large part that the justice system be working. This area is critical to our broad role as a Mission and involves not only our Human Rights Division, but also our police and rule of law components.

We have been involved in supporting mobile courts as a first step towards establishing more permanent courts. When the first mobile court was deployed about 18 months ago in Bentiu, where a number of people who had perpetrated sexual violence against women were put on trial, a lawyer attended the proceedings and informed us about what she witnessed there. She told us of a 15-year old girl who stood in court as four men accused of gang-raping her were brought in. These men were very cocky, very sure of themselves, very arrogant — until they saw her and her witnesses standing there, and their faces fell.

At the end of the trial, all four men were convicted and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 4 to 12 years. It and other cases had a sobering impact on the commission of sexual and human rights violations in the area. The mobile courts have done an enormous amount of good to ensure that impunity is beginning to end there. The lawyer also told me that a few days later she saw a line consisting of 47 women — she counted them — outside the court room waiting to enter. When she asked why they were there, she was told that these 47 women were witnesses queuing up to give evidence against the next cases of people who were being brought before the court for sexual abuses and other crimes.

Our role in this context relates not just to the mobile courts; it is also about strengthening the national police, the justice system, the prosecution, the judges — right through to the Ministry of Justice. In South Sudan, I am pleased to note, we are pushing against an open door because we have received extraordinary cooperation from the justice system in supporting us to help them improve their systems.

Finally, the third broad stream of our approach is engagement with the Government. Indeed, we can criticize the Government, but we also need to engage with it. We currently have three action plans with the Government: first, with the

military — the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces; secondly, with the police — the South Sudan National Police Service; and thirdly, with the forces of the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement in Opposition. These action plans enable us to work to create the conditions within these forces for the respect of human rights. Consequently, we are regularly invited to help train their contingents. This is a step in the right direction because we get in on the ground floor, so to speak, with the officers who are in charge of their forces.

Lastly, I want to speak about how we work in UNMISS. As I mentioned, human rights is not just a thematic area of work but is a cross-cutting approach throughout the Mission. For example, our Human Rights Division has a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Force, our uniformed peacekeeping component, which enables both to understand the scope of their respective work and viewpoints. To understand why an MOU is needed, Council members should remember that uniformed peacekeepers rotate every 12 months. Documenting the Human Rights Division-Force approach in an MOU ensures continuity. Our uniformed peacekeepers therefore see and respect the work of the human rights component and assist it in its workings; conversely, the Human Rights Division has a better understanding of the workings of the military component. The MOU ensures that both components are working off the same page and that human rights standards are adhered to.

I would also like to mention the important and specific role that women protection advisers and the Child Protection Unit play in advancing the work of the Mission. But most importantly, I would like to acknowledge the Chief of our Human Rights Division, Eugene Nindorera, who will be retiring in a month and a half after 10 years with the United Nations and a very long career as a human rights activist and a Government Minister in his home country of Burundi. I want to thank him for his hard work in helping to put human rights on the map in South Sudan.

Annex 3**Statement by the President of Groupe LOTUS and Honorary Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights, Dismas Kitenge Senga**

[Original: French]

A year and a half after the peaceful transfer of power and the election of President Tshilombo Tshisekedi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is experiencing a special situation that gives rise to both hope and concern if concrete and permanent acts of change do not support the political rhetoric that is being used nationally and internationally. Thanks to the new regime that came to power as a result of the elections of 30 December 2018, the public space has been opened up to multiple political parties and groupings, political exiles have returned home, several political prisoners have been released, previously closed private media have been reopened, and dialogue with international actors has resumed.

However, nowadays, the practices of the former political regime tending to give the green light only to public demonstrations that supported the policies of the President of the Republic characterize the behaviour of the security forces. At the security level, in the territory under Government control, the security and defence forces are facing a unity-of-command problem, dysfunction, a lack of resources and ineffectiveness in defending territorial integrity, which is currently being threatened by incursions on Congolese soil by armies from neighbouring countries, but also, and above all, ineffectiveness in securing people and their property. In Ituri, for example, the activism of the armed group known as the Coalition des démocrates congolais, which has involved the commission of serious atrocities against the local population, constitutes a serious threat to peace and security in that region.

In this fragile context, the human rights situation has been affected by the commission of frequent human rights violations, the impunity of most of the perpetrators of these acts, and the difficulties in implementing reforms urgently needed to improve the situation and establish the rule of law in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For example, illegal arrests and detentions, torture and inhumane and degrading treatment by law enforcement and security services, threats, attacks and arrests of human rights defenders, of which there have been approximately 10 since the state of emergency was imposed as a result of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as well as sexual violence in the special circumstances resulting therefrom, have been observed in several parts of the country in the absence of effective measures for their cessation and the prosecution of their perpetrators.

The fight against impunity and corruption, which is a priority in the five-year programme of President Tshilombo Tshisekedi's term, is hampered by the lack of a clear and coherent policy in this area. Furthermore, the economic and social rights of populations, which were already difficult to ensure, have been undermined by COVID-19 since the State budget was reduced, together with the massive violation of people's right to work and have access to health and education.

Continuing its mission in the framework of the implementation of the MONUSCO mandate adopted in December 2019 by the Security Council, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office (UNJHRO), in association with MONUSCO, monitors human rights violations committed throughout the country, reinforces the promotion and protection work capacities of its partners, including both State and civil society entities, contributes to the protection of human rights defenders, monitors and advises on actions to fight impunity and to implement necessary

reforms, and conducts advocacy with Congolese decision-makers and partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Although limited by shortages of resources and no longer located throughout the country since the closure of MONUSCO offices in seven cities in the Democratic Republic, the work of UNJHRO-MONUSCO is supported and assisted by civil society organizations that regularly provide it with information on human rights violations, participate in data consolidation in this field and present various training courses through the Office's branches. Non-governmental organizations receive support from UNJHRO-MONUSCO in their legal actions against the perpetrators of human rights violations and in their advocacy at various levels, as well as when, in the course of their work, their members are threatened or prosecuted by local authorities.

The COVID-19 pandemic in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has affected the work of non-governmental organizations focused on human rights as a result of reduced financial, human and material resources and of difficulties in travel and communication. Consequently, the work of information-gathering, training and advocacy has also been reduced. The UNJHRO-MONUSCO supports non-governmental organizations in the sharing of means of communication and the continuity of advocacy by facilitating logistical access, the interface with and the transmission of their concerns to the Congolese authorities and other partners in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly in the area of raising the awareness of populations in relation to their fundamental human rights in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With respect to the various activities of UNJHRO-MONUSCO, I and my organization have been able to make useful and relevant contributions. For example, in the mapping report published by the United Nations, Groupe LOTUS is mentioned several times. With regard to the protection of human rights defenders, not only have I myself benefited more than once from the assistance of the human rights, political affairs and military components of MONUSCO for my security through relocation to MONUSCO premises at times when, owing to my commitment to human rights, serious threats to my life were being made. The logistical and technical support provided by MONUSCO for my participation in national and international meetings on peace and human rights, as well as exchanges on analyses relating to national political issues, are reciprocal enrichments that have contributed not only to strengthening of the capacity of Congolese non-governmental organizations but also to the impact MONUSCO's actions has had on Congolese society in general.

In addition, it is important to highlight the work of Congolese civil society organizations as the interface between MONUSCO and the Congolese people, as well as in raising awareness about MONUSCO's activities among local communities and young people in schools and universities in the local languages. The different activities of the UNJHRO-MONUSCO in the field of human rights have enabled the Congolese people to understand the cross-cutting nature of human rights within United Nations peace missions as well as the global and integrated approach to peacebuilding in a post-conflict society such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In the light of all this, I think it would be useful to draw the attention of Council members to the importance of strengthening political dialogue with the authorities at the national and local levels, of protecting civilians and of providing resources for UNJHRO-MONUSCO's activities. Accordingly, I would make the following recommendations to improve MONUSCO's effectiveness in general.

Support must be provided for the good offices mission of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The presence and resources of UNJHRO-MONUSCO must be strengthened throughout the country, including in areas where MONUSCO offices have been closed. We should support the professionalization and accountability of the security sector — the army and the police being a priority — including through training on respect for human rights and the implementation of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy in its efforts to filter out individuals who impede security sector reform or commit human rights violations. We must continue to support the Congolese authorities in protecting civilians through effective means that are adapted to the situation. Political affairs units, including Radio Okapi, should be set up and strengthened in localities where MONUSCO offices have been closed. The fight against impunity and corruption must be supported in accordance with fair trial standards. We need to encourage efforts to ensure justice and establish the truth for the victims of serious human rights violations. We must support the organization of local elections and assist the reform of institutions established to support democracy, such as the Independent National Electoral Commission and the National Human Rights Commission. We need to support Congolese civil society organizations and engage and consult with civil society in MONUSCO assessment process and in considering exit strategies for the Mission, ensuring that in the process undertaken for MONUSCO's departure from the country an exit strategy based on objective criteria or benchmarks relating to the context of the Democratic Republic of the Congo is established.

Annex 4**Statement by the Federal Minister for Defence of Germany,
Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer**

I would like to express my gratitude to the briefers for their impressive briefings. Germany is delighted to preside over today's open debate on this very important topic.

Eleanor Roosevelt, who was the only woman on the team that drafted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, famously said with respect to the achievement of human rights:

“The immediate test is not only to the extent to which human rights and freedoms have already been achieved, but the direction in which the world is moving.”

That was in 1948. Today, we have every reason to ask ourselves: Is the world moving in the right direction? The answer is clear. The task that was handed to each of us — to make human rights universal — is far from complete. It will remain incomplete as long as the universality of human rights is questioned and undermined, even inside the United Nations. It will remain incomplete as long as borders are violated and moved at will. It will remain incomplete as long as the freedoms of speech and of assembly are illegally curtailed and withheld.

My main concern today is how human rights and peacekeeping are related to each other. This topic is of high importance for the United Nations. When we look at war zones around the world, it remains a notable fact that the vast majority of victims are civilians, and often they are intentionally targeted by the parties to conflict.

As Defence Minister, let me be very clear. Human rights have to be a primary concern in peace operations. Human rights should never be subordinate to operational effectiveness. Ultimately, military success is possible only as long as fundamental rights are firmly defended. Moreover, in our current situation — during a pandemic — we have to be attentive to upholding the universal human rights of every individual human being.

If human rights are to mean something — anything — the Security Council has a role to play and a responsibility to fulfil. The Council has a special obligation to guarantee the protection of human rights in each of the United Nations peacekeeping operations it authorizes. We need to dedicate significant resources to the human rights elements of these missions.

Fostering human rights is part of the capacity-building and advisory functions of United Nations missions, and it must happen in close cooperation with State authorities. The protection of human rights is essential to building resilient and inclusive societies so they can move towards sustainable peace.

How Blue Helmets conduct their operations has a direct influence on how United Nations peacekeeping, as well as the United Nations itself, is being judged by people in every corner of the world. Peacekeepers function as role models. That is why human rights aspects must be recognized from the very beginning by being included in the training and the evaluation of troops before they deploy.

I make the following pledge today. Germany will make human rights training a mandatory element in all peacekeeping training efforts we provide to the United Nations, in the same manner as we instruct and train our own German troops before they deploy. Furthermore, later this year, Germany, as a champion of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, will hold a high-level conference on peacekeeping, human rights and the protection of civilians. We want to deepen the

debate on the issues at stake. We want to jointly develop practical proposals for the Secretariat and for all troop-contributing countries. The goal is to better implement the human rights tasks within operations. We will also feed into this conference the results of two new German studies, namely, a study on the protection of civilians in peacekeeping and a study on how to increase the number of women in peace operation. Women are absolutely essential for peace operations, as only diverse teams can make peacekeeping truly successful.

Finally, let me thank High Commissioner Bachelet, Special Representative Shearer and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga for their dedicated work. Their efforts are particularly remarkable given today's unusual conditions, where conflicts continue against the backdrop of a pandemic and despite the Secretary-General's appeal for global ceasefire. It is a sign of hope that last week the Security Council adopted resolution 2532 (2020), in support of the Secretary-General's appeal.

Annex 5**Statement by the Deputy Foreign Minister for Multilateral Cooperation of Indonesia, Febrian Alphyanto Ruddyard**

I would like to join others in welcoming Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer to the Security Council and thank her for presiding over today's open debate on peacekeeping operations and human rights. I also thank all briefers for their insights on the issue.

The promotion and protection of human rights are part of the mandates of most peacekeeping operations in the field today. As the largest troop- and police-contributing country among members of the Security Council, with more than 2,800 personnel serving in eight missions, Indonesia has always emphasized the imperative of making peacekeeping mandates clear, specific and focused. This is to ensure that peacekeeping operations dedicate their resources to tasks that matter the most for the people. After all, the primary objective of peacekeeping operations is to promote peace through political solutions.

In fostering measures to achieve the goal, allow me to focus on three pertinent points. First, I would cite the importance of strengthening national capacity. The primary responsibility of promoting and protecting the human rights of citizens rests with the host country. We need to ensure that the host country has adequate protection-capacity to prevent the risk of human rights violations. The United Nations should therefore assist conflict-affected countries to strengthen their capacities.

Today, peacekeeping can play an important enabling role by providing technical assistance and support to relevant institutions in host countries. Indonesia has rigorously prepared and trained its peacekeepers, including in the area of human rights, and these peacekeepers stand ready to assist host countries in building their protection-capacity. However, realizing the culture of respect for human rights is a long-term endeavour. Efforts in that direction should therefore be part of holistic peacebuilding efforts that go beyond the life of peacekeeping operations.

Secondly, the implementation of human rights mandates requires a whole-of-mission approach. The delivery on a human rights mandate, particularly during the coronavirus disease pandemic, is not easy. Close coordination between human rights officers in a mission with the military, police, other civilian components and the United Nations country teams is key. Moreover, engagement with relevant national stakeholders and civil society is also crucial.

While fulfilling human rights mandates, it is also our task to ensure the safety and security of our peacekeepers. Not only should our peacekeepers be well equipped with relevant knowledge and capacity, but they should also be supported with the equipment and infrastructure they need.

Thirdly, with regard to the role of women peacekeepers, it is evident that women peacekeepers have made valuable contributions to mission performance, including in the promotion and protection of human rights. Their unique approaches in engaging the local community, in particular the women and children of those communities, enable them to prevent and address human rights violations more effectively. For Indonesia, community engagement is crucial to winning the hearts and minds of the population, which is key for the success of peacekeeping.

We are proud to be among the top contributors of women peacekeepers. Currently, we have 159 women peacekeepers serving in seven missions, including in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This number represents an increase of more than 50 per cent compared to last year. We are also

committed to preparing and training them with necessary skills and knowledge, including on human rights. Going forward, as part of our strong commitment to advancing the role of women as agents of peace, Indonesia will continue to advocate greater participation of and an increased role for women peacekeepers.

We underscore the responsibility of the Security Council in enabling lasting solutions to conflicts. The more a society is helped to move away from violence and conflict, the stronger its commitment to peace and human rights protection will be.

Before I conclude, I wish to convey our condolences to the family of the Indonesian peacekeeping staff member in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), who recently passed away. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia, allow me to express my sincere condolences to the family of Warrant Officer Rama Wahyudi, who lost his life during his service in MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He will be remembered as a hero, not only for Indonesia, but also for the world.

Annex 6**Statement by the Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon**

I thank the German presidency of the Security Council for convening today's important debate. I am also grateful to High Commissioner Bachelet, Special Representative Shearer, and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga for their insightful briefings. Their insights from the ground remind us that there can be no lasting peace or any sustainable development without respect for human rights and the rule of law. This oft-repeated refrain in the Security Council is a concept each of us endorsed in the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, but it is a vision that we all too often fail to realize.

I would like to turn to the situation in Mali as an example. Through the Security Council, we have mandated the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) to complete three vital human rights functions: first, to act to prevent serious human rights violations and attacks on civilians, in line with the United Nations protection-of-civilians policy; secondly, to monitor, investigate and report abuses or violations; and thirdly — and importantly — to support Malian efforts aimed at, on the one hand, protecting and promoting human rights, and, on the other hand, also importantly, fighting impunity. This multipronged role is fundamental to preventing a further erosion of trust between States and their peoples and thereby to ultimately helping to stabilize the country. The integrated response at the heart of the Mission's adaptation plan, with better coordination between military, police and civilian components, should enable MINUSMA to respond more effectively to reported abuses. It is needed.

Despite our best efforts, reports from High Commissioner Bachelet's Office and the Mission continue to highlight persistent human rights abuses and violations in Mali and indeed across the Sahel. MINUSMA, like any peace operation around the world, can only ever be a part of the solution. It is incumbent on all national Governments to protect and promote human rights, investigate allegations of violations and abuses openly and transparently, and hold those responsible to account. When national Governments are unwilling to act, and where the international community is able, we should always be prepared to deploy the full range of tools at our disposal and hold perpetrators to account, including through the use of sanctions. Strong coordination and collaboration among all relevant parts of the United Nations machinery and the Malian Government should enable the Malians to strengthen their capacity both to protect and to promote human rights, as well, importantly, as the rule of law.

United Nations peace operations have an obligation not only to monitor human rights violations and abuses, but also to ensure that their support for other security forces is human rights compliant. The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces sets this out very clearly. The Policy also gives an incentive to those security forces to deploy and strengthen their own safeguards. I encourage our missions to show more clearly how they are applying it. Every member of a mission's personnel, from the special representatives and force commanders to contingent troops, should understand their role and responsibilities both to protect and to promote human rights. We must ensure that missions have the specialist capabilities they need to respond effectively to specific human rights challenges in the field.

The devastating impact of conflict-related sexual violence in South Sudan, where nearly a quarter of the reported cases involve children, is an unwelcome

reminder of the abuses that take place and why we must do better and do more. Reports from the field tells us that survivors continue to struggle, particularly in terms of access to medical and mental-health care. That having been said, I am encouraged that the Government of South Sudan has acknowledged these concerns and expressed a willingness to work together with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to combat sexual and gender-based violence.

Let me assure everyone that the United Kingdom is absolutely committed to supporting survivors, including children born of conflict-related sexual violence, and to holding all perpetrators to account. We call upon all Council members to support the inclusion of vital human rights experts in our missions, including more gender and child protection experts, and, importantly, more women's protection advisers.

To conclude, human rights are all about safeguarding the dignity of each and every person around the globe and unleashing their true potential. That is why States that fail to protect and promote human rights are less prosperous, less stable and less able to meet the demands of their people, and more likely to remain on the agenda of the Security Council. Human rights are intertwined with all aspects of United Nations peace operations. The Council's focus must therefore be unflinching. We must promote, protect, strengthen and realize human rights wherever we work. It is in our interests. Indeed, it is in all our interests and in the interests of all people across the globe.

Annex 7**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Marc Pecsteen de Buytswerve**

Human rights and peace and security are closely intertwined throughout the whole conflict cycle. Indeed, human rights violations and abuses can be both root causes and consequences of conflict. Accordingly, respect for human rights and the guaranteed protection of civilians are cornerstones of sustainable peace.

We therefore warmly welcome the German initiative today to underscore the role of peace missions in protecting human rights. Peace missions add important value because they can identify violations and abuses, prevent such violations and abuses, and help build capacity in their operational contexts.

First, with respect to identifying violations, human rights components in peacekeeping operations play a crucial role in monitoring and reporting violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. They serve as eyes and ears on the ground, exposing the gravity and scale of threats that escape the attention of other actors.

Secondly, with regard to preventing violations and abuses, peace missions also have the ability to make context-sensitive and forward-looking threat assessments, which enables them to prevent atrocities or mitigate their impact, in line with the protection mandate with which most are endowed. However, comprehensive threat assessment is only possible with trained staff and good cooperation among missions, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations country teams.

Thirdly, with respect to capacity-building and support for host-country security forces, the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces is an essential tool for missions to support security forces in respecting human rights. A few years of practice have taught us that the Due Diligence Policy is also relevant in terms of transition planning and exit strategy. When, for example, the United Nations and the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo define benchmarks for a responsible exit of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), lessons can surely be drawn from the Policy.

Human rights are not just add-ons for missions — they are core business — and if we are serious about this business, we must mandate missions accordingly, staff them accordingly and budget accordingly. That is part of our commitment to the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Human rights components are key in engaging communities and local stakeholders to support mandate implementation. They also increase mission credibility across the board. For example, in Afghanistan, the work of the human rights component of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan contributed to building confidence between parties to the conflict, which is a condition for inclusive intra-Afghan negotiations.

Dedicated women protection advisers and child protection advisers are indispensable to fulfilling important protection mandates. Consolidation of human rights components in mandates and resource negotiations cannot come at the expense of such capacity. We have learned from experience that mandates, guidance and policy briefs do not automatically translate into operational human rights readiness for military personnel. We must train Blue Helmets before and during deployment with due attention to methodologies applicable in a mission context. Close cooperation

between the military, police and civilian components as well as the sharing of best practices between missions could improve human rights readiness.

We also advocate adequate regional attention to human rights. The European Union has extensive human rights components in its civilian and military missions. The African Union has its own human rights missions as well. We would like to encourage the Group of Five for the Sahel Joint Force to strengthen the implementation of the human rights compliance framework supported by the Office of the High Commissioner through the Joint Force's presence in the relevant States.

We would like to take this opportunity to honour the men and women who work tirelessly to advance human rights in the field despite numerous risks, including new challenges posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. For example, in MONUSCO, the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office has continued its work in support of national authorities to improve respect for human rights and strengthen the fight against impunity. Its COVID-19 response has entailed attention sufficient to address such issues as domestic violence and overcrowding in prisons. It is an example of the dedication that United Nations peacekeepers and civilian personnel have shown, for which we are grateful.

Annex 8**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

I welcome Minister Kramp-Karrenbauer to the Security Council and thank her for presiding over today's meeting. I thank High Commissioner Bachelet and Special Representative Shearer for their briefings. I also listened attentively to the briefing by Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga.

The first United Nations peacekeeping operation was launched in 1948. Since then, over the past 72 years, the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping have been broadened from monitoring ceasefires to comprehensive actions in the political and security fields. United Nations peacekeeping has become an important instrument for maintaining international peace and enhancing collective security.

The promotion and protection of human rights is a common ideal of humankind, but it is possible only when there is peace and stability. As a powerful instrument of the Security Council in the maintenance of international peace and security, peacekeeping operations have been playing an important role in upholding the rights to livelihood and peace of the people in host countries and have created basic conditions for them to realize their right to development as well as other human rights.

With regard to peace operations and human rights, I wish to highlight the following points.

First, the objective of peace operations is to support the political settlement of hotspot issues. Therefore, when the Security Council sets the mandate for a peace operation, the priority should be promoting political settlement. Whether human rights protection should be included in the mandate depends on the situation of the mission in question. Mandating everything under the sun without prioritizing makes it hard for peacekeeping operations to achieve their main objective. We can see in Mali and South Sudan that the issue of human rights is not the main driver of the conflicts. Accordingly, efforts to fulfil a human rights mandate should serve, not divert attention from, the central task of those peacekeeping missions. Only by promoting the peace process can we make the improvement of human rights possible.

Secondly, the ownership of host countries must be fully respected in the implementation of a human rights mandate. Human rights situations come in endless varieties and differ according to the specific situation in a country. Peacekeeping operations must strictly follow Security Council resolutions, fully communicate with host-country authorities and respect their unique circumstances. At the same time, the Governments of host countries have the primary responsibility of promoting and protecting human rights. Peace operations cannot do the job of Governments or parties to conflict in their place; rather, they should create a favourable environment for the relevant parties to promote and protect human rights.

Thirdly, peace operations should assist countries in responding to the coronavirus disease in order to promote and protect people's rights to life and health. The health of people in countries where health systems are weak, such as South Sudan, Mali and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, are under serious threat. Peacekeeping missions should, within their mandates, assist Governments in strengthening capacity-building, help the Governments and the people of host countries fight the pandemic, put people at the centre of their efforts and safeguard people's rights to life and health in an effective manner.

Fourthly, peace operations should strengthen prevention and punishment for internal human rights violations. Human rights violations by peacekeeping personnel

have been reported in recent years, undermining the image of the operations and exposing deficiencies in internal management. Peacekeeping operations, whether deployed by the United Nations or regional organizations, should improve internal management, strengthen discipline and effectively address and prevent such incidents to avoid negative results.

China is the second-largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping budget. It is also a major troop-contributing country, with more than 2,500 Chinese peacekeepers currently serving in nine mission areas. China attaches great importance to capacity-building for peacekeeping personnel. China provides strict predeployment training to ensure that peacekeepers better understand and respect local people and culture. Chinese peacekeepers are well-disciplined. They have successfully completed large numbers of peacekeeping tasks.

Peace, development and human rights are the three pillars of the United Nations and are mutually reinforcing. Peace operations have the mission of bringing about the peace that facilitates development and promotes of human rights. As the first country to sign the Charter of the United Nations, China remains true to its original aspirations. It will continue to honour its commitment to multilateralism and increase its contributions to peacekeeping and the cause of human rights.

Annex 9**Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger**

We would like to welcome today's briefers, who this morning enlightened the Security Council on such an important topic.

The Dominican Republic strongly supports any action, policy or strategy designed to protect human rights, as protecting people from human rights violations is directly linked to preserving human dignity. Accordingly, as a nation, we will always promote the recognition and safeguarding of human rights.

It is undeniable that human rights are key to the maintenance of international peace and security. Where human rights are not protected, there is no peace and no progress in a society. Furthermore, as tools to effectively protect human rights have been developed, particularly in places where there is armed conflict, the undeniable link between human rights protection, accountability and reconciliation has been key to eradicating conflict and attaining sustainable peace.

Those are not easy tasks. Great challenges persist in the absence of our full commitment and cooperation. We recognize the commendable work done by the human rights components of peace operations in monitoring human rights violations, investigating perpetrators, assisting victims and providing for conflict management and reconciliation.

We would like to highlight the paramount role United Nations peacekeeping plays in protecting civilians in armed conflict. In this regard, it is important that each peace mission rely on child protection advisers, women protection advisers and gender protection advisers, both civilian and military, and that those advisers be well equipped, adequately funded and accorded the level of seniority needed to carry out their work. Not only is their work essential to the maintenance of international peace and security but it also personally and individually touches the lives of victims who find in these components a light in the dark.

We would like to especially highlight the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, launched in 2018. As a direct result of the A4P initiative, the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations was put forward. We commend the more than 150 States Members of the United Nations that have now joined us in endorsing it and shown their strong dedication to a set of key priorities that build on both new commitments and existing workstreams.

The Dominican Republic would like to underscore the importance of appropriate training as a central element of the human rights components in peacekeeping operations. We believe that training is a stepping stone towards greater efficiency in peace operations, and an aspect that must not be sidelined. We need to tailor training to specific missions and integrate practical training needs that have previously been identified on the ground. Absent this basic principle, we are concerned that the deployment of peace operations could be hampered by inexperience and a lack of preparedness. Accordingly, we firmly believe that appropriate funding should be allocated for training, predeployment preparations and the equipment needed to meet the constant threats that peacekeepers face.

Against the backdrop of the coronavirus disease pandemic, human rights principles, including those touching upon economic and social rights and civil and political rights, must prevail and be respected across the spectrum, for they will be fundamental to the success of the public-health response. International cooperation is now more relevant than ever. We must come together despite all challenges to ensure the continuity of the good and necessary work of the human rights components of United Nations peace operations and to build a lasting peace.

Annex 10**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I thank Germany for convening today's open debate. We believe that human rights are directly linked to the maintenance of peace and security and the work of the Security Council, including with respect to peace operations. We thank all the briefers for their presence and their briefings.

Peace operations would not be able to fulfil their mandates effectively if they overlooked the issue of protecting and promoting of human rights. While, on the one hand, human rights violations can presage and drive conflicts and are regrettably a constant feature of conflicts, peace operations, on the other hand, are one of the Council's most powerful tools for managing conflict.

Human rights are also a part of the protection-of-civilians mandates given to most missions by the Council to help the most vulnerable in conflict. Peace missions can be helpful interlocutors in dialogues with Governments and with civil society. We underline the key role of the human rights components in United Nations missions and the strong support lent by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. I take this opportunity to thank High Commissioner Bachelet and her team for their work in this regard.

Dedicated women protection advisers and child protection advisers play an important and complementary role in protecting and promoting human rights. We note the importance of the cooperation between the human rights officers and protection advisers and believe that all of these components should be sufficiently funded. However, we also believe that a whole-of-mission approach — the cooperation between the human rights officers and the military and police staff — is key to making a real difference. We welcome the good examples that have been shared in this regard.

Similarly, good mission leadership is crucial. Indeed, human rights should be part of mission management at the highest level. We do not need human rights protection to be a token add-on with no real impact; rather, it must be an integral part of force generation, mission planning, management and oversight and evaluation. We note the steps that have been taken towards greater coherence to this end. Sufficient and practice-oriented predeployment training is one of the key elements in this regard.

In the context of the coronavirus disease, training and knowledge of the protection and promotion of human rights in practice helps missions better support countries dealing with the pandemic. We also stress the importance of applying a gender perspective to the human rights-related activities of peace missions and to the activities of missions in general. In parallel, we underline the need for the observance of human rights by the United Nations peace operations themselves, including by addressing all instances of sexual exploitation and abuse.

We value the exchange we have had today and look forward to following up on this topic in future discussions.

Annex 11**Statement by the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nicolas de Rivière**

[Original: English and French]

I thank the German presidency for organizing today's open debate, and I welcome the presence of the German Minister of Defence. I also wish to thank Ms. Bachelet, Mr. Shearer and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga for their briefings.

The coronavirus disease, whose humanitarian, economic and social impacts are a destabilizing factor, illustrates the strong connection between human rights, development and peace. To achieve sustainable peace, progress must be made on these fronts in parallel, which is why the Security Council must take into account economic and social rights, as well as civil and political rights, when carrying out its mandate to maintain peace and security. The protection of human rights is not only an objective in itself; it also contributes to effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

The human rights mandate given to peace operations and missions should be an integral part of the political strategy led by a Special Representative or Special Envoy in conjunction with United Nations country teams and national authorities. Such a political strategy must be based on an inclusive dialogue with all components of society — women, youth, human rights defenders and marginalized groups — in order to address the root causes of conflicts and prevent crises. This is what reform and the actions carried out by the Secretary-General, which we fully support, mean. The inclusion of women in peace processes must stop being a slogan and become a reality.

I would like to commend the human rights components of the missions that perform essential functions. First, we note the warning role they play. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Shabunda action plan, launched in response to investigations by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has led to the arrest of an armed group leader responsible for violations and abuses.

Secondly, we acknowledge the importance of the human rights components' support for national authorities. For example, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali provides essential support for national investigations, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic supported the creation of the Special Criminal Court by launching investigations into serious violations. Nevertheless, we reiterate that the primary responsibility lies with host countries; indeed, there can be no effective human rights protection without their mobilization.

Thirdly, we note the human rights components' integration into local communities, which is at the root of early-warning mechanisms for the protection of civilians.

Finally, through the human rights components' knowledge of victims, they are able to respond to victims' demands for reparations. The Global Fund for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, which France supports, should benefit from the expertise of peace missions and operations.

To live up to this demanding mandate, peace operations and missions must be provided with the necessary skills, resources and budgets. Moreover, the United Nations and its peacekeepers should be exemplary when it comes to human rights. This is a priority for France.

I would like to recall the importance of the zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse. We support the certification procedure for national military units designated to serve in operations, and we recall the importance of adequate training to prevent sexual violence.

Every year, France trains 30,000 French-speaking African soldiers likely to be deployed in peacekeeping operations. Training extends to respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law. France also supports a strengthened role for regional organizations in this area, which is why we have provided legal advisers to the European training missions in Mali and the Central African Republic, the NATO mission in Iraq and the Group of Five for the Sahel.

Let me recall the importance of the human rights due diligence policy followed by the United Nations in its cooperation with non-United Nations forces. It is a question of credibility but also of effectiveness. In the Sahel, the implementation of the human rights compliance framework is inseparable from the operationalization of the Joint Force of the G-5 Sahel. In that regard, we commend the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Finally, there is no doubt that strict respect for international humanitarian law and human rights law is a precondition for the success of peacekeeping and the fight against terrorism. It requires a continuous dialogue on human rights that is constructive and solutions-oriented with a view to enabling States to meet the security, justice and prosperity needs of their people.

Annex 12**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Gennady Kuzmin**

I welcome you, Madam President, in presiding over this important video-teleconference. My thanks also go to Ms. Bachelet, Mr. Shearer and Mr. Kitenge for their participation.

Peacekeeping and peace operations are of the utmost importance today in an ongoing challenging environment. These operations have always been seen as a pivotal activity of the United Nations in the area of maintaining peace and security. We pay tribute to the courage of the more than 100,000 United Nations civilian, military and police personnel who are currently serving worldwide on behalf of the international community to protect peace and international law.

We appreciate the personal efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to ensure the effective functioning of peacekeeping operations. No matter how peacekeeping reform proceeds in future, what should stand at the core of that process is respect for the sovereignty of host countries, compliance with the Charter of the United Nations and adherence to the basic principles of peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and the non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. Neutrality and a mandate-oriented standard of conduct as well as respect for local customs, practices, culture, religion and traditions are all well-known postulates that can prevent peacekeepers from risking becoming involved in conflict.

We fully understand the importance of the human rights component in peacekeeping. Unfortunately, the topic of human rights has been extremely politicized, which is detrimental to the international community's trust in the United Nations human rights machinery and in human rights as a whole. In such a situation, the credibility and recognition of peacekeeping missions and their human rights component are directly dependent on the decency of individual employees and their ability and desire to rely on objective information.

The Security Council is not a human rights body. Any attempt to somehow squeeze the topic of human rights into its agenda encroaches upon the prerogatives and mandates of the Human Rights Council, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and other relevant institutions. However, splitting mandates is only half the trouble. More concerning are attempts to use human rights as an instrument for exerting political and military pressure on other countries. We know of examples of interventions made for the sake of human rights and of their devastating consequences.

At the same time, the main objective of United Nations peacekeeping and political missions is to promote reconciliation and peacebuilding. Other tasks, including the human rights component of mandates, are auxiliary. They are designed to contribute to the achievement of the main goal and should not replace the priority areas of peace operations.

It is necessary to carefully and responsibly approach the implementation of the human rights component of the activities of various United Nations structures and to avoid duplication of their functions. Excessive emphasis on human rights issues at the expense of other problems facing the international community today inevitably leads to the overloading of the entire system and a decrease in the efficiency of its work.

The prevention and resolution of armed conflict are the main means of preventing human rights abuses, not vice versa. Human rights violations are not

the cause of conflict but their consequence. The best contribution that the Security Council could make to protecting human rights is to work effectively on its main task — to safeguard international peace and security — in accordance with its mandate and the Charter of the United Nations.

Annex 13**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King**

At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines thanks the briefers for their remarks and commends the German presidency for convening this important discussion.

Peace operations are some of the most effective tools at the disposal of our United Nations system to mitigate the effects of violent conflict, promote stability and lay the foundation for lasting peace and security. In pursuing those noble ends, peace operations perform key political functions whereby conflict-affected States are reconfigured and social norms are realigned as new institutions are built and the authority of the State is re-established. The integration of human rights components within peace operations fosters a structural shift where rule-of-law provisions, social norms and political cultures that maximize the rights and privileges of all civilians become embedded in the post-conflict status quo. In that regard, we welcome the selfless sacrifices that all peacekeepers make in committing to this honourable purpose.

While freedom remains universal in character, it is crucial that human rights components not be universalized in a manner that disregards local cultures and traditions, and thereby undermines host countries' capacity to curate the delicate seeds of peace. Indeed, there is no one-size-fits-all approach. Human rights components must be designed and integrated into peace operations in such a way that local customs and values are safeguarded, while the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all States are respected. To that end, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the ongoing reforms to peacekeeping operations under the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which brings nationally led political solutions to the forefront of our efforts to maintain international peace and security.

Our delegation emphasizes the critical role of regional and subregional organizations in our quest for lasting peace. The engagement and leadership of the African Union on peace initiatives across the African continent is a pertinent example of how a regionalized focus can strengthen protections for rights and freedoms by accentuating the contextual realities of conflicts, improving community engagement, facilitating constructive dialogue and building trust among stakeholders in accordance with the aspirations of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

We call upon the international community to renew its efforts to strengthen the capacities of all States, in line with national priorities and in accordance with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda remains the primary blueprint for inclusive people-centred growth and development upon which greater freedoms can be made readily available to all, while the root causes of conflicts are comprehensively addressed.

In addressing root causes, it must be noted that abuses committed by all parties must be accounted for and adequate restitution provided to victims and survivors. We have seen instances in the past where peacekeepers themselves have committed human rights violations against the very civilians whom they are mandated to protect. In Haiti, acts of sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children and other forms of violence committed against Haitian citizens have left deep-rooted traumas and a general distrust of United Nations engagement in the country, further magnifying a perception of illegitimacy borne out of the peace operation's role in initiating the deadliest epidemic in the country's history. Haiti still grapples with the remnants of these protection failures today.

The quest for freedom and justice has always been, and remains, the cornerstone on which our global civilization has advanced. Our delegation therefore considers it a moral imperative for all actors in the international community to promote political inclusion, social welfare, economic participation and protection under the law for all persons, without discrimination of any kind. These are key pillars upon which lasting peace and prosperity are rendered, and peace operations play a critical role in assisting conflict-affected States to mend their social fabric and implement these fundamental safeguards.

Annex 14**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

It is an honour to have the Federal Minister of Defence of Germany, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, preside over this debate. We view this debate as important, not only due to its focus but also because it is the first time that the Security Council discusses the topic of peace operations and human rights under the agenda item on peacekeeping.

My delegation is grateful for the briefings received from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, David Shearer, as well as civil society representative and President of Groupe LOTUS based in Kisangani, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Dismas Kitenge Senga.

Our deliberations today are taking place at a time when the world is grappling with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, which has impacted all of us, irrespective of our levels of development and of whether or not we are experiencing conflict. However, countries in conflict where peacekeeping operations or special political missions have a presence would require additional support to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the population's human, as well as political, social and economic, rights.

The inclusion of human rights elements in numerous mission mandates established by the Council reflects its general acceptance of the relevance of human rights to peace and security efforts. South Africa notes with concern that the topic of those human rights elements has not escaped the political dynamics of the Security Council as it continues to be politicized and applied selectively. While some members of the Security Council advocate for the importance of the human rights component in peacekeeping missions, it is regrettable that the same vigour and enthusiasm is conspicuously absent from other missions, such as the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara.

We must not put ourselves on the wrong side of history by allowing our narrow interests to trample over the interest of the majority of world citizens, whom the Council is mandated to serve, particularly those in conflict areas during this global crisis. The Council should commit to implementing the protection of civilians mandates of peacekeeping missions, where required, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, mission mandates and applicable international law without fear, favour or prejudice.

In line with the principles of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, launched by the Secretary-General to refocus peacekeeping through more targeted mandates, make peacekeeping operations stronger and safer and mobilize support for political solutions and better equipped and trained forces, South Africa wishes to highlight that the pursuit of sustainable political solutions should guide the design and deployment of United Nations peacekeeping operations. Lasting progress on strengthening security, national reconciliation, the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development needs to occur in parallel.

Indeed, the host country bears the primary responsibility to protect civilians. In that regard, we wish to stress the contribution that, where mandated, peacekeeping operations can make to international efforts to protect civilians and promote and protect human rights. The protection of women and children, as those most vulnerable in such contexts, is paramount and can be enhanced through the involvement of

women and girls in the peacebuilding process, which remains undervalued and underresourced, leaving a vital tool for transformative change and sustainable peace underutilized.

The inclusion, training and support of women protection advisers responsible for monitoring, analysing and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence in the seven missions — the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya — is a step in the right direction. Furthermore, the creation of gender units within the leadership team in nine peacekeeping operations to ensure that women's rights and the women and peace and security agenda are mainstreamed across all mission activities is welcome progress as we mark the twentieth anniversary of landmark resolution 1325 (2000) and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. It is clear that the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda directly contributes to the objective of long-term global peace and security.

Peacekeeping operations are mandated to monitor and report; however, if human rights violations fall outside the scope of the protection of civilians, it may be difficult for peace operations to intervene without the appropriate mandate. The sharing of best practices and lessons learned among Council members is important, and the experiences of the major troop- and police-contributing countries with regard to integrating human rights aspects of the mandates into the work of an operation on the ground are crucial.

In conclusion, South Africa wishes to highlight the positive contributions special political missions and peace operations can make, through their peacebuilding mandates, by sharing their expertise in building institutions responsible for the promotion of human rights in collaboration with host countries. Such an approach can go a long way in building and sustaining peace and in promoting human rights when working in tandem with national authorities and civil society, including grassroots community-based organizations.

Annex 15**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations**

We are pleased, honourable Federal Minister, to see you presiding over our meeting today, and we thank Germany for having chosen this important topic for our discussion in the Security Council.

I welcome the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan and thank them for their briefings. I also thank the representative of civil society for his presentation.

There is no doubt that human rights and international peace and security are intimately related. Discussing their interplay is not only relevant to the Council's work but is also crucial for its mandate. Unfortunately, history offers plenty of illustrations of how human rights violations lead to hostilities and how, in conflict situations, individuals become even more vulnerable and subject to systematic abuses and atrocities. Conscious of those dynamics, the Security Council has been keen to include the human rights dimension in the mandates of peace operations since the early 1990s, thereby enabling United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions to play a critical role in the protection of human rights through monitoring, reporting and even intervention where necessary.

We believe that such a role is also crucial to advancing the peace processes in countries emerging from years of violence and turmoil. It is highly important that the Council consider how it can best support peace operations in this domain when discussing human rights aspects of individual missions' work during their periodic reviews. Among many options, Council members could reflect on how to mobilize more financial resources, as well as better trained and more skilled personnel, for peace operations in order to ensure higher performance on the human rights component. Cooperation with troop- and police-contributing countries is important in that regard.

While it is true that peace operations are doing their best within their mandates to protect human rights, it is obvious that such a task would also require ownership and appropriation by the local players, including governmental authorities and civil society. Promoting local human rights defenders will ensure that human rights remain protected even after a mission's drawdown. Implementing capacity-building programmes in host countries and raising awareness about the human rights and peace nexus are crucial in that regard and should also be considered as priorities during mandate discussions. Close cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and with local non-governmental organizations would be highly useful to attune a mission's human rights component with local realities and cultural particularities in host countries. Moreover, we believe that women peacekeepers can more effectively access some segments of the population, such as women and children in conflict situations. They can be more instrumental in supporting victims of gender-based violence and violence against children, as well as in spreading the culture of human rights among local populations.

To conclude, Tunisia would like to flag that human rights should be at the core of all phases of conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. When the parties to a conflict respect human rights, it is often much easier to end conflicts and build bridges for peace.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

I thank High Commissioner Bachelet, Special Representative Shearer and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga. It is critical that the Security Council hear from civil society, including human rights defenders, and I am particularly grateful today that we were able to hear Mr. Kitenge Senga's insights.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has created unprecedented challenges to United Nations peacekeeping missions around the world. Mandates are being reprioritized as peacekeeping operations shift to focus on COVID-19 response. In the light of this, it is essential that peacekeeping continue to protect and promote human rights.

Human rights are universal, and defending them is non-negotiable. That is why 154 Member States, including the United States, endorsed the Secretary-General's Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. The commitments in part recognize that lasting progress in human rights is fundamental to advancing political solutions to conflict. Integrating human rights into peacekeeping enhances the impact of peacekeepers while helping conflicts recede.

Peacekeeping missions' monitoring and reporting on human rights violations is essential to creating the conditions for accountability, justice and, eventually, peace. The missions must work with host nations to develop human rights vetting procedures that build post-conflict security institutions that help sustain that peace.

We fully support the human rights divisions, joint protection teams and mixed gender engagement teams in peacekeeping missions. Although some members of the Council regularly attempt to cut human rights officers and funding from peacekeeping budgets, the Trump Administration will continue to advocate for their retention — their work is simply vital. These peacekeeping missions have clear mandates to engage in the promotion of human rights, and we have an obligation to support them in doing their work.

There are several peacekeeping missions doing excellent work in the protection and promotion of human rights.

First, we would like to highlight the innovative and steadfast efforts of the human rights division of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan to release women and children from captivity, document violations and support South Sudan's nascent institutions in respecting human rights. Those efforts are life-saving, and the United States fully supports them.

Secondly, the human rights division of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali has documented and reported in central Mali on Government forces' violations in the region. That is the first step to tackling impunity and holding Governments accountable. The United States values the independence and candour of that human rights reporting. Only when we improve accountability can we rebuild trust between Malians and their Government.

Thirdly, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, jointly with the United Nations Development Programme, supports the Central African Republic's Ministry of the Interior and Internal Security Forces with a vetting process for police recruits and staff. The application of the United Nations Human Rights Due Diligence Policy is fundamental in that regard. Through this collaboration, the United Nations ensures that its support

to the Central African Republic's justice and corrections sectors is in compliance with international human rights standards.

As Mr. Kitenge noted, armed groups and Congolese security forces have repeatedly violated human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We are encouraged by increasing judicial accountability for wrongdoing and expect to see more progress in this area. We encourage other members of the international community to join us in supporting efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region to hold violators responsible for their actions.

We also believe it is necessary to increase women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping missions, and the United States continues to push for an increase in recruitment. Women peacekeepers offer unique skill sets, perspectives and opportunities for engagement that can make peace operations with a civilian protection mandate more successful.

Missions with protection of civilian mandates often face challenging decisions on ways to respond to threats against civilians. Real-time cooperation and information-sharing between mission components is critical to facilitating the timely identification, prevention and mitigation of threats to civilians and human rights abuses. There is room for greater integration among civilian and military mission components. Such integration should take place among the mission's various analytical and reporting cells, as well as with non-governmental organizations and the United Nations country team.

Integrating human rights into peacekeeping is essential to building the conditions to sustain peace. We cannot lose sight of that. As we reprioritize mandates, it will be important to fully support the protection and promotion of human rights so that those living in conflict-affected areas can have a better future for themselves and for their children. In the end, that work is critically important for creating a more peaceful world and it helps us to live up to the high expectations the world has for the Council. We must support and fulfil that mission.

Annex 17**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I thank you, Madam Minister, for presiding over this important debate.

We join others in thanking High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, Special Representative David Shearer and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga for their informative briefings.

Encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, regardless of race, sex, language or religion, is one among the primary purposes of the United Nations. I am inspired to acknowledge that since 1991, when the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador was mandated to verify compliance by the parties with a related agreement on human rights, United Nations peace operations have persistently contributed to the realization of that purpose.

However, year after year, we continue to receive heart-wrenching reports of, among other things, the recruitment and use of children, widespread sexual and gender-based violence and situations that have caused a vast number of internally displaced persons with which United Nations peace missions have had to grapple. In that context, my delegation would like to stress the following points.

First, on the role of host countries, it is important to reiterate that peace operations must be carried out in accordance with the basic principles of political impartiality, consent of the parties and non-use of force except in self-defence and defence of the mandate. The promotion and protection of human rights remain primary responsibilities of host countries. Therefore, peace operations should support the host countries in undertaking those responsibilities with a constructive approach based on the aforementioned principles and an awareness of the economic, social and cultural context of local societies.

Secondly, as to the accuracy and relevance of information, reports and analysis become influential through the process of monitoring and making policies. Accordingly, peace missions must prepare their work based on accurate, unbiased, balanced and verifiable information. Moreover, to avoid any overlapping with the work of other United Nations agencies specialized in the promotion and protection of human rights, the scope of that information should fall within the boundary of peace operation mandates.

Thirdly, with respect to areas of concentration, as can be seen in, among others, the latest reports of the Secretary-General, 2019 was a year of suffering for civilians in armed conflict. Sexual violence remains a cruel tactic of war, and record numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons have been recorded. In conflicts, vulnerable persons suffer the most. Peace operations that are so mandated should pay considerably more attention to the promotion and protection of the rights of those persons.

Fourthly, concerning conduct during deployment, in the provision of services peacekeepers must be the champions of adherence to human rights. We call on mandated peace missions to strictly implement and observe United Nations strategies and guidelines to address all forms of misconduct. In that connection, we support peacekeepers being adequately prepared and given specific technical skills and substantive knowledge on the matter, both before and during deployment, in order to be well-equipped for their task.

In conclusion, I would like to salute the great courage and contribution of United Nations peacekeepers who have spared no effort and made sacrifices,

especially in the face of current coronavirus disease pandemic to assist host countries in navigating the long and challenging path from armed conflict and instability to peace.

Annex 18**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

As this year marks the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), Argentina wishes to reiterate its firm commitment to the implementation of the women, peace and security agenda. Today more than ever, we see the relevance of that agenda and its validity on the ground.

In the current context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and in line with the statement made by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix, in his briefing of 22 June (see S/2020/572), Argentina would like to express its support for the United Nations focus on measures to protect personnel in the field, mitigate the impact and spread of COVID-19 and collaborate with national and local authorities, especially on efforts to empower women.

Argentina believes that human rights have become an innovative catalyst for both peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Many of the current field missions have integrated human rights components into their mandates, which facilitates a wide range of actions and activities for a mission to strengthen its strategic position and credibility.

United Nations peace operations, as one of the international community's key instruments for the maintenance of international peace and security, play a critical role in preventing human rights violations. That is because, on the basis of their mandates and rules of engagement, they monitor and report human rights violations and, if necessary, intervene in some cases, thus contributing to the successful promotion of peace processes.

Argentina considers fundamental the work of the human rights divisions of peace operations on monitoring, investigating, verifying and reporting violence, human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, including violence and abuses against children and women. The missions thus support the task of improving civil society capacity to monitor and report on human rights, in dialogue with the host States.

Peacekeeping operations must pursue their commitment to the protection of civilians by promoting full respect for international law, in particular humanitarian and human rights law. When faced with human rights violations, missions must decide, in accordance with their mandates, how to react and intervene, what tools to use and whether follow-up is necessary. It is therefore of vital importance that troop-contributing countries adequately train the personnel being deployed to deal with such situations, in particular taking into account a gender perspective. There is a direct link between the public image of the United Nations before the world and the results achieved by peace operations in terms of the protection of civilians and the defence of human rights.

Argentina would like to reiterate its firm commitment to the Secretary-General's policy of zero tolerance towards sexual abuse and exploitation in peace operations. Peacekeeping personnel must adhere to the highest standards of conduct and behave in a professional manner at all times in carrying out the mandate issued by the Security Council.

Furthermore, Argentina categorically condemns acts of sexual violence in armed conflict, supports efforts to prevent such acts and promotes accountability and the punishment of those responsible. It also concurs with the Secretary-General's

recommendations aimed at promoting access to justice for victims, the adoption of a holistic, victim-centred concept of justice and preventive actions under disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes in peacekeeping operations, among others.

We consider it essential to protect, include, assist and reintegrate all victims of such violations, in collaboration with women's organizations and other civil society organizations, through the provision of multisectoral and multidisciplinary gender-sensitive assistance and support services and reparation measures. Such assistance should address the needs and protect the dignity and human rights of the victims through measures aimed at eliminating the multiple forms of discrimination, marginalization and stigmatization they often suffer during socioeconomic and cultural reintegration into their families and communities of origin.

Argentina also considers that including a gender perspective in human rights work of peace missions is fundamental in order to address the full spectrum of human rights abuses. Thus, we must ensure that experts in gender, gender-based violence and sexual violence are included in those missions. The role of women in protection advisory bodies, monitoring, analysis and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence is also critical. Including gender units in human rights teams is positive for women's rights and the women, peace and security agenda.

Increasing demands are being made on the personnel of United Nations peace operations. The challenges are ever greater and more complex, particularly in the area of promoting and protecting human rights, on which we must work actively. In that regard, Member States and the Secretariat must find ways to maintain the highest level of training for the implementation of increasingly diverse mandates, identify capacity gaps and work together to create peace operations that are fit for purpose.

Argentina considers it a priority to continue these discussions and periodic meetings of Council members with troop- and police-contributing countries. We encourage the Council to continue working to achieve a constructive, transparent and inclusive dialogue among States and other stakeholders so as to continue to bring our best efforts to the societies and nations where the Organization is deployed.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Rabab Fatima**

I thank the German presidency for organizing this virtual high-level open debate. I also express my sincere appreciation to Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Mr. David Shearer and the representative of civil society for their insightful remarks.

The protection and promotion of human rights are an essential prerequisite for achieving sustained peace. It is particularly important in the context of conflict and post-conflict situations, where nascent local and national institutions lack the resources and capacity to address gross human rights violations and where societies often run the persistent risk of relapsing into violence.

As a State party to all major international human rights instruments, including the two Covenants and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Bangladesh is deeply committed to the cause of human rights. Bangladeshi peacekeepers have a proven track record of upholding human rights in their areas of operation. We have made human rights a mandatory component of our peacekeepers' professional training. In addition, the Bangladesh Institute of Peace Support Operations and Training has developed extensive curricula on the protection of civilians mandate as part of predeployment training courses.

And the impact is quite visible. In South Sudan, for instance, Bangladeshi peacekeepers have been providing security for people living at protection of civilian sites and protecting humanitarian convoys while on route and during distribution of humanitarian services. They are providing a variety of health and social services, with their own funding, including free basic medical and veterinary treatment, the distribution of textbooks to schools and the training of women in various income-generating skills. The formed police unit of Bangladesh deployed in Darfur has received special recognition for its work, which includes providing security to the camps, capacity-building for Sudan police, free medical camps and the distribution of schoolbooks.

Bangladeshi peacekeepers also protect people from various forms of conflict-related sexual violence and violence against children. Our women peacekeepers have been playing a critical role in providing courage and comfort to the victims of sexual violence. The experience of Bangladeshi peacekeepers in interacting with victims of human rights violations in conflict settings proved to be of great use in providing critical, life-saving services to the traumatized Rohingyas who had fled persecution in Myanmar.

We recognize that the protection of human rights is a key component of the protection of civilian mandate for peacekeepers. Yet we are worried that peacekeepers often lack the wherewithal to deal with such complex and politically sensitive domestic issues. In that regard, we would like to share some of our observations.

Peacekeepers are already overstretched with their ever-expanding mandates and limited resources. Therefore, any new mandate should be accompanied by corresponding resource allocations. Likewise, the human rights mandate should be met with adequate and appropriate resources based on the specific needs of the mission. For instance, more female peacekeepers need to be deployed in situations where there is higher risk of conflict-related sexual violence against women and children.

In order to improve the human rights readiness of peace operations, there should be adequate emphasis on the training and capacity-building of peacekeepers in the United Nations human rights regime. Given that the quality of predeployment

training may vary from one country to another and that some of the training may also prove non-operational in the specific mission environment, arrangements should be made for in-mission training based on needs on the ground. Furthermore, the host Government and local authorities have to be adequately sensitized about their human rights obligations, as well as their responsibility to protect. Otherwise, there is the potential to create mistrust between the peacekeepers and the host authorities, eventually adding to the existing challenges for peacekeepers.

To address gross violations of human rights or curb imminent atrocity crimes, peacekeepers need to have access to credible threat assessments conducted in real time by various United Nations mechanisms, such as mission-specific human rights monitoring mechanisms, United Nations monitoring and reporting mechanisms on grave violations of children's rights and monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence.

The civilian component of peace operations needs to be strengthened to ensure greater United Nations engagement with the host Government, local authorities and, wherever applicable, civil society organizations. Such collaboration can help immensely with national capacity-building in the areas of prevention, protection and prosecution of human rights violations, as well as with building trust.

Adequate emphasis should be placed on the issues of safety and security of peacekeepers and on accountability for crimes committed against the United Nations personnel, including peacekeepers.

Peacekeepers alone cannot fulfil their human rights mandate in situations where the political process for conflict resolution and sustaining peace has not taken root. The Security Council has the responsibility to constantly support peace operations. It has to use its authority to urge the host country to find a sustainable political solution and foster institution-building. It also needs to address the ongoing cases of human rights violations in an objective and non-selective manner as part of its responsibility under the Charter of the United Nations. Only then can the State itself gradually take over from peace operations the responsibility of protecting its nationals' human rights.

The Council has to prevent or address ongoing atrocity crimes and end the culture of impunity which, otherwise, will only embolden perpetrators and make peace operations more difficult. For example, removing Myanmar's Tatmadaw from the category "violation of recruitment and use" in the latest report of Secretary-General on children in armed conflict (S/2020/525), despite a threefold increase in violence against children there, sends the wrong message. With such contradictions, it will not be easy to integrate human rights in peace operations.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has exacerbated many conflicts and the human rights situations in those countries. It has further reduced the already fragile capacity of conflict-ridden States to promote and protect human rights. This is making peace operations more challenging. In that context, the implementation of the Secretary-General's appeal for a global ceasefire and the Security Council's recent resolution 2532 (2020) hold the key to successful peace operations.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations**

First of all, I would like to congratulate Mr. Christoph Heusgen, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for the month of July and to wish him and his delegation every success. I would also like to express my gratitude to him for organizing this special event on such an important issue as peace operations and human rights. This debate is a great opportunity to exchange views, and I am convinced that its outcome will be constructive and useful for the United Nations system and the Member States.

In the present peace and security environment, United Nations peacekeeping is in constant evolution. The current peace operations context demands increasingly complex peacekeeping missions and coherent mandates that effectively correspond to the situations on the ground. Taking into account changes in the nature of conflicts, it is vital that the United Nations system continue its efforts to identify and address new challenges.

It is important to emphasize that the protection of human rights is one of the crucial elements of United Nations peacekeeping. The challenges facing the Security Council with regard to the protection of human rights call for greater international cooperation and better coordination among the Security Council, other United Nations bodies and agencies, United Nations country teams on the ground, as well as regional and subregional organizations. Additional efforts should be made by the United Nations system to be better equipped to adequately respond to situations that specifically threaten civilian populations.

In that regard, the strategic partnership between the United Nations and the African Union in the field of peacekeeping and peacebuilding must be preserved and further developed. The exchange of experts and specialists between the two organizations is essential in enhancing the planning of peace support operations and conflict prevention.

One of the most important reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the reform of the security sector. That reform was based on, inter alia, full respect for human rights, including women's rights. The activities, which began in 2008, were aimed at the greater involvement of women in the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina have also participated as peacekeepers in United Nations missions to help in peacebuilding activities at the international level. They contribute to peacebuilding missions, assisting with the implementation of peace agreements and supporting Governments in implementing security reforms and protecting civilians, especially the most vulnerable population groups, namely, displaced persons, returnees, women and children.

Bosnia and Herzegovina places great importance on the women and peace and security agenda. I would like to underline the need for greater implementation of that agenda and increased representation of women in decision-making processes. In a changing global context, the substantial involvement of women in efforts to prevent threats to international peace and security is as essential as it has ever been. The United Nations system must play a pivotal role in promoting women's participation in peace and security processes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina collectively is committed to implementing the women and peace and security agenda and its priorities by ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in all stages of the peace process and by systematically integrating a gender policy designed to increase the number of

uniformed women in peacekeeping. Bosnia and Herzegovina is also committed to implementing the protection of civilians mandates of peacekeeping missions and will support effective performance and accountability by all peacekeeping operations under the United Nations flag.

In addition, Bosnia and Herzegovina has signed the voluntary compact on preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse and will hold personnel and leadership accountable for proper conduct, including by supporting the United Nations zero-tolerance policy, with its victim-centred approach, towards all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Bosnia and Herzegovina recognizes the importance of including persons with disabilities and will ensure that all steps are taken to meet their essential needs and promote their protection, safety, rights and dignity in situations of armed conflict and humanitarian emergencies.

In order to uphold human rights during deployment in mission areas and to protect civilians from gross human rights violations and abuses, human rights and atrocity prevention are both mandatory components of Bosnia and Herzegovina's military and police training, as well as predeployment and in-mission training for all Bosnia and Herzegovina peacekeeping personnel. Awareness of international human rights law and humanitarian law is a foundational element of the training provided at the Peace Support Operation Training Centre in Sarajevo. That training enables peacekeeping missions to monitor and investigate rights abuses, analyse potential atrocity crimes, fulfil protection of civilians responsibilities and build the capacity of State institutions. Despite a widespread perception that existing training practices and methodologies are insufficient and fail to integrate the practical training needs identified on the ground, very well-trained peacekeeping personnel, in coordination with human rights officers, can enable missions to use different types of expertise in order to maximize their mission's impact on the protection of civilians.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as a Member of the United Nations, has joined the Secretary-General in developing a set of mutually agreed principles and commitments to respond to the challenges and create peacekeeping operations fit for the future. In that regard, Bosnia and Herzegovina has endorsed the Declaration of Shared Commitments on Peacekeeping Operations and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which essentially reflects the commitments as a collective action to strengthen peacekeeping in multidimensional operations and at the same time protect human rights in peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, Bosnia and Herzegovina stands ready to actively engage in efforts to promote equality and counter discrimination through laws and relevant institutions and will encourage rights-based, inclusive public narratives; give particular attention to discrimination against women, persons with disabilities and migrants; combat hate speech in the digital space; and seek to ensure that the United Nations system and efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopt a human rights response to discrimination and inequality, thereby ensuring that no one is left behind or treated differently.

Annex 21**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Ronaldo Costa Filho**

Let me first congratulate the German presidency on placing this important debate on the critical link between peacekeeping and human rights front and centre on the Security Council's agenda.

Peacekeeping is likely the most visible face of the United Nations, presenting every single mission deployed with a set of particular responsibilities related to promoting and protecting human rights. Peacekeeping operations are a useful instrument at the service of the international community to prevent human rights violations in conflict and post-conflict situations and to provide humanitarian support to local populations. By preventing armed conflict and civil strife from reigniting and by keeping belligerent parties apart, peacekeeping operations play a critical role in saving lives, deterring gross human rights abuses and keeping violators and criminals in check.

As peacekeeping has evolved over the decades, the United Nations has become increasingly aware of the importance of including humanitarian, development and human rights concerns in the mandates of its peacekeeping operations. In doing so, peacekeeping operations are a means of addressing the root causes of a conflict, avoiding disputes from resuming and facilitating the transition from conflict situations to post-conflict peacebuilding.

Peacekeeping missions that have in-built protection of civilians mandates are especially focused on advancing a people-centred approach integral to human rights and help prevent serious human rights violations and abuses. Peacekeepers can also play an instrumental role in supporting States to fulfil their protection responsibilities, thus contributing to advancing the human rights of local populations.

There is yet another side to that multifaceted relationship between peacekeeping and human rights: peacekeepers must not only prevent human rights abuses from taking place but must also refrain from committing human rights violations themselves. Blue Helmets must abide by the highest standard of conduct, which includes respect for human rights, and should be held accountable if they fail to do so. In that regard, Brazil encourages the United Nations to develop evaluation mechanisms in a transparent manner to ensure that peacekeeping leadership and police and military units fully comply with human rights, both in their predeployment training and during in-mission activities.

Troops serving under the United Nations flag must be assigned clear tasks and standards on human rights and be cognizant of the full range of their responsibilities in executing their duties, whether they are patrolling conflict zones or engaging directly with local communities. In doing so, they should strictly follow conduct and discipline protocols that respect the human rights of the local population.

Adequately preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse is also a core strategy for promoting and respecting human rights in the context of peacekeeping. In this respect, I would like to highlight that Brazil is a staunch supporter of the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse. We have also developed extensive predeployment training and deployment protocols on this matter, which is a priority for the Brazilian military.

These elements intertwining peacekeeping and human rights are an integral part of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which provides a useful conceptual and operational framework for dealing with this complex and multifaceted relationship. In our view, Action for Peacekeeping should be

strengthened and emboldened with active engagement by Member States, as the most recent substantive session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations showed to be possible.

When it comes to advancing human rights, the use of force must never be used except as a last resort. Overusing force under the pretext of protecting human rights can compromise the credibility and legitimacy of peacekeeping missions and damage the fundamental principles of peacekeeping. In fact, peacekeeping operations should above all make full use of peaceful measures, such as strengthening cooperation within civil-military coordination cells and human rights components in order to establish links with the local population, gather information and understand and respond to the community's main threats and concerns.

Brazil is proud of the track records of its peacekeepers in both protecting and respecting human rights on the ground. Rigorous human rights screening, selection and preparation help ensure that Brazilian peacekeepers meet the highest standards in human rights.

My country is committed to its predeployment training, another key element of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Adequate predeployment training ensures that military troops and police officers are better equipped to protect local populations, ensure their own safety and security and implement conduct and discipline protocols on the ground.

The Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Centre/Sérgio Vieira de Mello Centre and the Navy's Peacekeeping Centre have provided training not only for Brazilian Blue Helmets but also to peacekeepers coming from a range of international partners, including Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, Germany, Mexico and Switzerland.

We must encourage the essential role of women peacekeepers, which includes, but is not limited to, building trust with local communities. By liaising with local actors, female uniformed personnel can assess how human rights can be enhanced and better implemented on the ground.

The role gender advisers play in peacekeeping operations must be highlighted as an important contribution to creating a culture of respect for human rights in host countries and within missions themselves. Brazil is particularly proud that two of its female peacekeepers — Commander Márcia Braga and Commander Carla Araújo — distinguished themselves, receiving the United Nations Military Gender Advocate Award, respectively, in 2018 and 2019, for the work they each carried out in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. Their work exemplifies some of the best practices Brazil supports in promoting human rights in peacekeeping operations.

In conclusion, protecting and respecting human rights in the realm of peacekeeping operations are two sides of the same coin, to which Brazil remains actively committed.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations**

[Original: English and French]

I thank the Permanent Mission of Germany for convening today's high-level open debate on peace operations and human rights. Canada welcomes this important discussion on the central role of human rights in peace operations. Ending conflict and setting conditions for durable and inclusive peace is impossible when the rights, dignity and freedoms of people are not put at the heart of our efforts.

That is why Canada will always support robust human rights mandates for United Nations peace operations and the efforts of individual missions on the ground to fulfil those mandates. Protecting against backsliding requires constant vigilance, particularly as we struggle to allocate finite resources across competing priorities. Recalling the Secretary-General's *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights*, issued in February, and the challenges outlined for enhancing human rights analysis in order for peace operations to contribute more effectively to the promotion and protection of human rights, Canada would like to highlight the following five areas where we are attempting to put human rights at the core of peace operations.

To achieve their mandated objectives, peacekeeping and special political missions require appropriate and predictable funding and human resources. Member States have a collective responsibility to ensure peace operations have the requisite human and financial resources to successfully carry out their mandates in the complex environments in which they operate. Ensuring that human rights components are staffed and resourced appropriately is essential. Canada stands as the ninth-largest contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping budget, and one of the top providers of voluntary contributions to the Department of Peace Operations. We have also proudly contributed a total of \$10.5 million to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali Trust Fund, which is investigating human rights abuses, and to ensure better protection of women and girls affected by conflict in Mali. We, along with our partners, will continue to lead efforts to ensure the proper resourcing for these missions and their human rights components is in place.

The promotion and protection of human rights are shared responsibilities — ones that require coordination of efforts, not only with host Governments but also among contributing Member States and across the United Nations system. In a mission environment, ensuring a coherent One United Nations approach is vital. Peace operations must work hand-in-glove with programmes, funds and agencies to resolutely implement essential human rights tasks, working in partnership with host Governments, civil society and other partners. In Haiti, for example, Canada has consistently advocated for closer coordination between the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti and the United Nations country team to address human rights concerns. As the country currently faces overlapping sanitation, humanitarian and security crises, we recognize that human rights cannot be dealt with in a vacuum or solely as a security issue.

Canada also believes that applying analytical frameworks such as gender-based analysis plus to the field of human rights will enhance the ability of peace operations to contribute more effectively to the promotion and protection of human rights, and is critical to address the full spectrum of violations and abuses. Human rights interventions, tools and mechanisms are part of the collective toolbox of the United Nations system and the international community to support Member States. As the Secretary-General so well articulated, ensuring that Special Representatives

are provided with the necessary capacity and expertise on human rights will fully mobilize the diverse capacities of the United Nations, allowing missions to undertake human rights risk and opportunity analysis, including gender-specific analysis. Analytical frameworks such as gender-based analysis plus will allow missions to better assess their needs and the potential outcomes of activities with a view to creating greater diversity with their approaches to mandated human rights objectives.

Canada also believes that investing in the meaningful participation of uniformed women in United Nations peace operations is more important now than ever, as populations isolate in response to the coronavirus disease, and some human rights abuses may become increasingly difficult to identify. We cannot ensure that the human rights of all are protected if peace operations do not accurately reflect the populations that they serve and interact with. Canada is pleased to have worked with Uruguay to introduce gender-balanced engagement platoons in the recent update of the *United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual*. However, these types of units are just one way for more women to deploy and support human rights in peace operations. The United Nations Elsie Initiative Fund for Uniformed Women in Peace Operations also offers a premium for troop- and police-contributing countries deploying “gender strong units”, which include substantial representation of women overall and in positions of authority, provide gender equity training and ensure parity of deployment conditions for all unit members. We encourage troop- and police-contributing countries to apply for this innovative funding modality in the Fund’s second programming cycle.

To effectively promote and protect human rights, the United Nations and its peace operations have an obligation to lead by example. Cases of sexual exploitation and abuse involving United Nations personnel undermine the entire mission and efforts of the United Nations. They break the United Nations promise to protect the world’s most vulnerable. Combating this scourge while placing the rights and dignity of victims at the forefront of collective efforts is key. That is why Canada strongly advocates for the full implementation of the United Nations zero-tolerance policy and urges troop and police contributors, as well as all components of the United Nations, to uphold their obligations to investigate allegations and take action. We are also proud to have provided financial support to the United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator on improving the United Nations response to sexual exploitation and abuse and to the United Nations Trust Fund in support of victims of these acts. Leading by example also means that the Secretariat and peace operations ensure the full and effective implementation of the human rights due-diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces. This is particularly important in contexts where United Nations peace operations are mandated to protect civilians and provide support to national security forces or regional operations.

It is crucial that the United Nations system leverage the full potential of its human rights instruments throughout its activities, including in joined-up analysis, shared objectives to common operational programming, decision-making and implementation. It is also crucial that human rights considerations be adequately integrated into the generation, operational configuration and evaluation of uniformed personnel of United Nations peace operations.

Canada is convinced that peace operations and the promotion and protection of human rights are inexorably linked. Concrete solutions are at our disposal to ensure these initiatives are fully implemented within United Nations peace operations mandates. Protecting and defending human rights are shared duties. Canada will continue to work closely with other Member States and civil society, including human rights defenders, in support of the work of United Nations peace operations in this area.

Annex 23**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations, Maritza Chan Valverde**

At the outset, I would like to express Costa Rica's appreciation for the convening of this high-level open debate to consider the interlinkages between peace operations and human rights. Costa Rica also welcomes the presence of the Minister of Defence of Germany, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and we thank them for their remarks.

Over the past seven decades, United Nations peacekeeping has evolved into a complex global undertaking. Peacekeeping operations are not an end in themselves, but a tool for protecting civilians and enabling political negotiations in conflict-affected States, which can lead to viable and sustainable peace processes. In this regard, please allow me highlight two aspects that are of relevance to my delegation.

First, we need to improve our monitoring mechanisms for violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law through sharing of information, good practices and, most important, capacity-building and training for peacekeepers. Peacekeeper training, in particular regarding human rights and protection issues, is a strategic investment that enables United Nations military, police and civilian staff to effectively implement their increasingly multifaceted mandates. Without such training, there is a risk that some military personnel could see all human rights issues as the responsibility of human rights sections alone, diminishing their own contributions to monitoring and addressing grave violations. There should be no disconnect between the normative framework on which peacekeeping is based and human rights-related mandated tasks carried out by a mission. Protecting civilians must include upholding their rights.

Secondly, sexual violence remains a pervasive tactic of modern war, one recognized as a war crime that is preventable and punishable. Costa Rica would like to raise its concerns over sexual and gender-based violence in areas of operations, cases of sexual exploitation and previous abuses committed by United Nations personnel, despite the existence of conduct and discipline systems and a zero-tolerance policy. It is crucial that the United Nations, the media and civil society groups continue to exert pressure on countries that contribute peacekeepers to respond to abuse allegations more seriously and more transparently. Otherwise, prosecutions of crimes will remain the exception. The global response to such crimes must ensure the punishment of the perpetrators and comprehensive support to survivors.

The impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has been multidimensional and the challenges that peacekeepers face in fulfilling their mandates — especially related to the protection of civilians — are greater than ever. Peacekeepers are not only having to cope with the pandemic but must also support and protect people amid rising infection risks. In this regard, we would like to recognize the work carried out by the Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support and, most important, by the peacekeepers themselves, who continue to protect the vulnerable while adapting to new circumstances affecting their own protection. Costa Rica also welcomes the implementation of a system-wide COVID-19 medical evacuation treatment framework for United Nations patients. Costa Rica is honoured to serve as a regional medical evacuation hub in the western hemisphere.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ecuador to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

I express my appreciation for the organization of this high-level open debate. It provides an important occasion to reiterate once again our commitment to the full promotion and protection of human rights under all circumstances, including in peace operations. The Security Council bears particular responsibility in this area, as do peace operations.

I welcome the briefings by Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Minister of Defence of Germany; Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; and David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan.

This topic is vitally important as we consider prevailing circumstances, not only because of the persistent and protracted armed conflicts around the world but also in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The pandemic has put health systems to the test and drawn attention to the vulnerability of certain groups that have disproportionately suffered socioeconomic difficulties, health-related problems and a deterioration in the enjoyment of their rights.

That is why, on 22 June, Ecuador co-launched the joint statement in support of the Secretary-General's call for a worldwide ceasefire to both facilitate humanitarian access and serve as a first step towards lasting peace.

Implementation is now essential with regard to resolution 2532 (2020), on COVID-19, adopted on 1 July, urging an immediate universal cessation of hostilities in all situations and calling on all parties to armed conflicts to implement a humanitarian pause for at least 90 days.

What is the role of peacekeeping operations in facilitating the implementation of the right to peace? In this context, the protection of human rights is both an objective and a tool. Here, prevention is key. But it is also crucial that there be no impunity whatsoever.

The protection of civilians, as discussed in May (see S/2020/465), and in particular the protection of the rights of children, as discussed by the Council in June (see S/2020/594), constitute the essential role of peace operations in terms of human rights. That is why joint protection teams have been established, with uniformed and civilian components, as well as mixed-gender engagement teams, with the effective participation by women.

In this regard, the Constitution of Ecuador establishes the Armed Forces as an institution to protect and guarantee citizens' rights and freedoms. Human rights are considered to be part of the responsibilities of defence political leadership — including the promotion of gender equality policies and of practices conducive to coexistence and respectful of the cultural identity of contingents, as well as the effective application of resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1889 (2009).

We firmly believe that the effective way to establish and maintain peace is by strengthening the protection of and respect for human rights in conflicts, together with the full, equal and meaningful participation of women at all levels of decision-making and at all stages of peace processes and mediation efforts, including in the prevention and resolution of armed conflicts.

The human rights situation continues to be of great concern not only because of the number but also because of the serious nature of violations in conflict areas, as reflected in numerous reports documenting situations in which rights are affected by State and non-State actors alike. Faced with these circumstances, peace operations must provide an integrated and comprehensive response to protect human rights.

There is a direct link between the results of efforts to uphold, promote and protect human rights and the credibility of United Nations operations. We therefore condemn all acts of sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking of women and children, including in humanitarian crises, by humanitarian workers, military, police and civilian personnel involved in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and we support the voluntary compact to prevent and address sexual exploitation and abuse, introduced by the Secretary-General.

We welcome the efforts made by United Nations agencies and peacekeeping operations to implement a zero-tolerance policy in this regard, and urge them to continue taking all appropriate measures necessary to combat such abuses.

We also condemn any intentional attack targeting personnel, facilities, materials, units or vehicles involved in humanitarian assistance or peacekeeping missions under the Charter of the United Nations, which is why Ecuador co-sponsored resolution 2518 (2020), on the security of peace operations personnel, in March.

This year marks the seventy-second anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations. In this context, Ecuador reiterates its commitment to continuing to support the mainstreaming of human rights throughout all United Nations actions, including in the area of peace and security.

Annex 25**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires ad interim of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Gustavo Martin Prada**

I have the honour to submit this statement on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania; the country of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

Respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is essential to ensure sustainable peace and security. As underlined in the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, "lasting progress in strengthening security, national reconciliation, the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development needs to occur in parallel".

The Security Council has an extensive set of tools at its disposal to promote respect for human rights, including through peace operations, but also commissions of inquiry, judicial mechanisms, visiting missions and sanctions. The EU calls on the Security Council to make full use of those tools in order to create and support the conditions for international peace and security.

With regard to United Nations peace operations, the EU welcomes that most missions created or authorized by the Security Council have human rights tasks in their mandates. By monitoring compliance, reporting violations and abuses, protecting and offering assistance to people in vulnerable situations and building the capacity of State institutions, missions can effectively contribute to the realization of human rights. It is therefore crucial to ensure that human rights components are sufficiently funded and have the capacity to undertake their tasks.

We commend the concrete impact of human rights components, such as the work of the human rights component of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which was instrumental in creating the conditions for a dialogue with all parties. The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo contributed to reconciliation efforts there, notably by helping establish a missing persons resource centre, bringing together for the first time representatives and families of missing persons from all communities.

As part of an integrated approach aimed at building long-term peace, United Nations peace and security instruments must work in tandem with development, human rights and humanitarian efforts from the outset of a mission. Human rights violations and abuses can be drivers of conflict and restoring respect for human rights will often contribute to addressing root causes and to sustaining peace.

Despite these positive examples, the EU regrets that peacekeepers often remain ill-equipped to identify and respond to human rights threats and to promote respect for international law. Analysis of best practices and of lessons learned shows that efforts are needed on several fronts to ensure that individual peacekeepers have the necessary skills and institutional support to respect and protect human rights.

In terms of training, human rights and international humanitarian law are part of the predeployment training of all EU troop-contributing countries, to sensitize peacekeepers to rules and obligations under international law, codes of conduct and cultural awareness. The EU would welcome efforts to standardize that practice for all troop-contributing countries and to develop a more applicable training to enhance the operational human rights readiness for all Blue Helmets. The EU stresses the importance of the selection process for troop contribution, which includes the

certification of vetting relating to international humanitarian law and human rights law as well as human rights screening.

Turning to human rights-based threat assessment, monitoring and reporting undertaken by human rights components in peacekeeping operations should feed into threat assessments and strategies for the protection of civilians. Forward-looking threat assessments, including on human rights violations and abuses, can enable missions to prevent violence before it occurs, or mitigate its impact. Such assessments also contribute to stronger mandate implementation, improve civilian protection capacity and support transitional justice processes.

In terms of gender mainstreaming, measures to advance gender equality must be mainstreamed, including at the early stages of operational planning. We welcome the recent Department of Peace Operations initiative to track progress and gaps on key women and peace and security outcomes as enshrined in the Department's 2018 gender policy, Action for Peacekeeping commitments and mandated mission tasks, with the use of 15 women and peace and security indicators that were institutionalized by all nine missions.

When it comes to child protection, well trained child-protection focal points and the allocation of adequate resources are essential to ensure effective monitoring and reporting of grave violations and abuses, including through the speedy deployment of senior child-protection advisers and their teams. This is particularly important to prevent underreporting of certain trends and patterns of violations and abuses, and to ensure the implementation of the Security Council-mandated monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict.

Turning to modern technology at the service of the protection of civilians, if properly applied and integrated into United Nations peace operations, modern technology has the potential to change the face of peacekeeping with enhanced capabilities to detect threats, identify targets and improve situational awareness. The use of modern technology should take into account challenges in the areas of signal intelligence, cyberdefence, information fusion and big data, and ensure full compliance with human rights, including the right to privacy.

The importance of an integrated assessment on human rights with the aim of incorporating all mission components into a comprehensive human rights approach cannot be overstated.

In terms of organizational culture, the ways gender is represented and violence and abuse are understood within key institutions warrant increased attention. Harmful power structures ought to be examined and dismantled in order to prevent and fight against the institutionalization of impunity. Enhanced data collection and reporting on misconduct as well as actions against those who breach the agreed rules and guidelines are essential measures.

Let me turn now to EU action. The EU is fully committed to these principles. The EU's external action is guided by the principles that inspired its own creation: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity and respect for the principles of the Charter of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy for 2020-2024, which is under consideration at the EU level, foresees that a human rights due diligence policy will be developed to ensure that support to security forces is in compliance with the EU human rights policy and consistent with the promotion, protection and enforcement of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

Human rights mainstreaming forms an integral part of the mandates of the 11 civilian missions and six military missions and operations currently deployed by the EU. Human rights and gender considerations are addressed during the planning process for new missions and operations and assessed regularly through the strategic review processes. In addition, human rights and gender components are systematically included in EU predeployment training courses.

The EU missions and operations engage on human rights and gender-related issues by supporting representative law enforcement, security forces and justice-sector institutions, promoting the equal and meaningful participation of women in those sectors, addressing discrimination on any ground and sexual and gender-based violence, and promoting awareness of and compliance with international humanitarian law.

The EU Military Training Missions in Somalia, Mali and the Central African Republic all include human rights law and international humanitarian law in their training programmes for host country national armed forces and cooperate with United Nations peace operations on the ground in delivering training on human rights, the protection of civilians and other related fields. The EU Military Training Mission in Mali, for instance, has developed practical, gender-responsive scenarios for the application of human rights and has prepared a train-the-trainer manual on international human rights law and humanitarian law for the Malian armed forces.

The same goes for the EU Civilian Capacity-Building Missions Sahel Mali and Sahel Niger, which have developed training materials and modules on human rights, international humanitarian law and children's rights and juvenile justice, which are regularly delivered to security forces.

In Kosovo — this designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with resolution 1244 (1999) and the advisory opinion (see A/64/881) of the International Court of Justice on the Kosovo declaration of independence — the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) has continued to support selected Kosovo rule-of-law-institutions in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international standards. In the context of its monitoring of criminal proceedings in cases of domestic violence and sexual abuse, the Mission has paid particular attention to the protection of the rights of child victims and witnesses, as well as to the effectiveness of referral mechanisms and of measures aimed at avoiding further victimization. EULEX has also monitored the rights of children in conflict with the law in the criminal justice system and in the correctional system, providing advice to the relevant institutions with the goal of ensuring the reintegration of such children and the primary consideration of their best interests.

On EU-United Nations cooperation, the United Nations is best placed to play a leading role in coordinating the support provided by international and bilateral partners and the United Nations system to provide expertise, advice and training to the national security forces they support and to strengthen their capacity through human rights training.

Human rights are a central element of the EU-United Nations Strategic Partnership on Peace Operations and Crisis Management. Through this Partnership, we have, notably, established a collaborative platform on women and peace and security to enhance coherence and integration of gender perspectives throughout our cooperation. We have also agreed to intensify cooperation on policing, the rule of law and security sector reform, as well as on the promotion of international humanitarian law and the protection of children and other persons in vulnerable situations in conflict and post-conflict areas.

This cooperation is leading to tangible results on the ground. In Somalia, the Rule of Law and Security Institutions Group of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia and the European Union Capacity-Building Mission in Somalia have joined forces to support the efforts of the Somali Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development in promoting the role of women in the maritime sector. In the Sahel, the EU, through the African Peace Facility, supports the strengthening of peace and security structures of the Group of Five for the Sahel (G-5 Sahel), including the Collège de Défense of the G-5 Sahel. We are working closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to ensure that the curriculum of the Collège includes human rights law and international humanitarian law modules to support G-5 Sahel countries in preventing and responding to human rights violations.

The EU strongly supports national oversight institutions, such as national assemblies and national human rights institutions, and is working closely with local communities and civil society to inform all its actions and to identify risks. We welcome that the Security Council is increasingly interacting with civil society representatives and human rights defenders. Discussions in the Council are better informed, mandates more precise and decisions more inclusive when civil society is involved.

Despite these successes, however, it is clear that more needs to be done. We have learned, for instance, from the recent report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2020/525) that during 2019 over 25,000 grave violations against children took place. Of those, more than half were committed by non-State actors, and a third by Government or international forces. Similarly, conflict-related sexual violence persists as a challenge. We must join efforts to work harder against the ongoing abuse of children and women, and for respect of human rights of all. The ambitions and goals must be set higher for the years ahead.

Annex 26**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations**

Fiji congratulates the Federal Republic of Germany on assuming the presidency of the Security Council during this period. Fiji thanks the President and the Council for continuing to schedule open debates virtually.

Fiji is grateful for and welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the important topic of peace operations and human rights.

Last month, we commemorated the seventy-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations was founded on the pillars of peace and security and respect for individual rights. The Preamble to the Charter states: “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war [...] to reaffirm faith in the fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person.” This crucial open debate on peace operations is therefore highly timely.

Secretary-General António Guterres stated that “every measure to uphold human rights helps ease tensions, deliver sustainable development and sustain peace”. This call applies equally to United Nations peace operations. Human rights violations fuel instability, worsen conflicts and ultimately undermine peace operations.

In 2015, Member States adopted the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Peace and development are closely intertwined. The protection of human rights is the most crucial building block for sustaining peace.

Conflicts have grown increasingly complex, with a wide range of non-State actors contesting with Governments within, or in close proximity to, communities. Communities are subjected daily to the chaos, uncertainty, suffering and danger of conflicts, which create the conditions for abuse and violation of rights. Peace operations are located within this context of fluidity and uncertainty.

Fiji welcomes the United Nations Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which aims to make United Nations peacekeeping more effective, efficient and fit for purpose. One condition for the effectiveness of peacekeepers is their operational readiness — the high standards of knowledge, training and capabilities to respond to the challenges of the peacekeeping environment.

Fiji welcomes the mainstreaming of human rights in peace operations, to promote and protect communities. The ongoing coordination and collaboration of the United Nations departments responsible for peace operations with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights has been encouraging. Fiji welcomes the further strengthening of this link.

That coordination and collaboration has enabled the deployment of human rights teams to most multidimensional United Nations peace operations, the support and the integration of human rights considerations into mission planning and tasks and the inclusion of human rights issues in manuals and training for police, military and civilian peacekeepers. These developments bring human rights into the very heart of peacekeeping. But this is only a helpful start. There are many more steps to be taken on this pathway.

Ultimately, States are responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights in their communities. Improving communities’ livelihoods and access to economic opportunities, social protection and health care through development are important steps towards achieving the universalization of human rights. Integrating United Nations development capabilities more centrally into its peace operations would be a helpful way forward.

Peacekeepers and peace operations contribute to promoting and protecting human rights in collaboration with host countries. Collaboration and coordination between host States and peace operations should be strengthened. Communities need to be accessible, and there is a need to strengthen funding for human rights capacity-building.

The training of peacekeepers is equally important. Peacekeepers should be made aware of how they contribute to promoting and protecting the human rights of the communities they serve. Adherence to the United Nations-designated Core Predeployment Training Materials and specialized training materials is important. Collaboration with United Nations agencies and international organizations during predeployment training can enhance peacekeepers' awareness on human rights.

Member States should continue to incorporate human rights awareness into the professional development of their defence and police forces. This will establish a solid foundation of human rights awareness among defence and police personnel, who are potential peacekeepers. Partnership programmes with other Member States and international organizations can support and assist in capacity-building.

Fiji reaffirms its commitment to supporting United Nations peacekeeping and to providing the United Nations with highly trained peacekeepers. The United Nations standards are our standards.

Fiji, in partnership with our bilateral partners, continues to improve the training standards for our peacekeepers, including on human rights awareness. This is not a one-off partnership; rather, they are routinized, long-term partnerships. Fiji is thankful to all our bilateral partners for their efforts in strengthening leadership, human rights awareness and other peacekeeping capabilities. We encourage other countries to explore such partnerships that allow countries to share human rights training, expertise and experiences.

Fiji pays considerable attention to learning from its peace operations deployments. Learning about human rights protection and monitoring during each mission needs to become routine across United Nations operations. More important, we suggest there would be significant value in sharing lessons across different missions. Conflicts are now transforming more rapidly. As they transform, the importance of sharing lessons across missions will be even more elevated.

Annex 27**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Finland to the United Nations, Jukka Salovaara**

I thank the German presidency of the Security Council for convening this discussion in the form of an open debate.

I have the pleasure to submit the following statement on this important topic on behalf of the Nordic countries — Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

The protection and promotion of human rights is at the core of the United Nations mandate, constituting one of its three fundamental pillars. Effective integration of human rights and gender equality across and within all pillars of the United Nations is crucial for the Organization's ability to contribute to sustaining peace and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Human rights integration into peace operations is a vital achievement, affirming that respect for human rights is a key condition and prerequisite for lasting peace.

Human rights components should be standard in peace operations, in order to enhance their quality and effectiveness, not least in the promotion of human rights and the protection of civilians. Mandates must be matched with adequate funding so missions have the capacity to undertake these tasks and fulfil their objectives. We need to integrate and mainstream human rights throughout all United Nations work, including on the peace and security pillar. The Human Rights Due Diligence Policy remains a core tool in that endeavour.

The Nordic countries pursue a human rights-based foreign and security policy. Our countries are long-term supporters of United Nations peacekeeping, and the human rights-based approach lies at the centre of our participation in international crisis management. Human rights and its gender dimensions are an integral part of the training we provide to our peacekeepers and experts. We have also consistently supported initiatives within the United Nations to improve the monitoring of and compliance with human rights, both in the field of training and in human rights screening. This includes the development of the concept of "human rights readiness" and the implementation of the Human Rights Due Diligence Policy on United Nations Support to non-United Nations Security Forces as an important component of our commitment under the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

We would like to emphasize three key elements of effective peacekeeping that have a direct bearing on the protection and promotion of human rights: training, the participation of women, and taking a comprehensive approach in crisis management.

With regard to training, human rights, including efforts towards ensuring accountability, need to be an integral part of all military and police training, including predeployment training for uniformed and non-uniformed peacekeeping personnel. A good example is specialized training courses focusing on topics such as integrating human rights into strategic planning as well as implementing the women and peace and security agenda.

International cooperation offers opportunities to share best practices, compare and develop training modules and materials, exchange trainers and students, and create and harmonize standards. In this regard, special thanks go to the United Nations Integrated Training Service for its support and guidance to Member States.

Regarding women in peacekeeping, the Nordic countries have a long-term commitment to promoting gender equality and women's full enjoyment of human rights. Integrating a gender perspective into all aspects of the work of the United Nations, including peacekeeping, is a necessity.

The inclusion and effective participation of women in peace processes are a prerequisite for sustainable peace. Likewise, participation of women in peacekeeping improves operational effectiveness, including through increased access to local communities. Better understanding of the challenges facing those communities strengthens a mission's capacity to prevent and end human rights violations. It also enhances a mission's ability to implement its protection of civilians mandate, with a particular focus on protection of women and girls, women's participation and preventing conflict-related sexual violence. Women peacekeepers help build a closer relationship with women, thereby bolstering community relations and situational awareness.

The Nordic countries consider it essential to increase the participation of female peacekeepers. We need to ensure that the United Nations gets the people best qualified. As an example, we would like to cite the training of female peacekeepers through UN-Women, gender parity courses and the efforts undertaken by the Police Division in the Department of Peace Operations to increase the number of female police officers in United Nations operations.

Turning to a comprehensive approach in crisis management, peacekeeping — like all other efforts towards peace — is inherently political. It should not be carried out in a vacuum. Peacekeeping has to be an integral part of an inclusive peacebuilding process that creates ground for reconciliation, social cohesion and sustainable peace and development. Regular monitoring and analysis of the patterns of human rights violations, such as their incidence and severity, should constitute a key input into a mission's early warning analysis and thereby contribute to the implementation of protection of civilians mandates.

Human rights violations can be drivers of conflict, and restoring respect for human rights will often contribute to addressing root causes and to sustaining peace. From the outset, the United Nations system must simultaneously aim to build the national capacity needed to address these challenges. As per the thinking on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, peacekeeping, political processes, development cooperation and humanitarian aid should be planned and implemented hand in hand. Joint context analysis and common outcomes are vital to ensuring a well-coordinated and successful use of the tools working towards sustainable peace.

Another aspect of comprehensiveness is the need to ensure that the United Nations mission and the host country share the objectives of the mission and that the different elements, civilian and military alike, of each mission work seamlessly together and with the local authorities and population.

These three elements — training, the participation of women and a comprehensive approach — will continue to be cornerstones of the Nordic approach to effective peacekeeping and crisis management.

Annex 28**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations**

The delegation of Guatemala would like to thank Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, German Federal Minister of Defence, for convening this open debate, and to extend our acknowledgment to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and to the Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, Special Representative of the Secretary-General David Shearer, for their remarks. As a troop-contributing country, we believe that it is essential to discuss all aspects of peacekeeping under the United Nations flag, especially at a time of rapid change due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

As previously expressed before the Security Council, Guatemala attaches singular importance to United Nations peacekeeping operations as an indispensable instrument for the maintenance of international peace and security. This vision has given rise to our readiness to contribute to peacekeeping operations in Africa, the Middle East and, years before, in Haiti. During our participation throughout the years, we have witnessed how peacekeeping efforts have evolved, both conceptually and operationally.

However, as conflicts have become more complex, the risks of human rights violations rise. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic is challenging our societies, presenting a colossal test of leadership and humanity, as the High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated in her 2019 annual report.

The role of human rights and United Nations mechanisms remain essential. Human rights violations are both cause and effect of destructive conflict, which does not distinguish between women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and others. We strongly believe that connecting the agendas of human rights and maintaining peace offers a unique strategic entry point to help shift a culture from reactive crisis management to one of prevention, especially in a global context where human rights tend to be restricted or attacked for the sake of security approaches.

In this regard, Guatemala considers the report of the Independent High-level Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) to be extremely relevant, in that it recalls that all efforts are necessary to promote and protect human rights as a means of conflict prevention and relapse prevention. The Secretariat has provided considerable technical cooperation to develop national capacities to prevent human rights violations, as well as to strengthen the capacities of civil society and communities for early warning and response systems.

Furthermore, we stress that the integration of human rights strengthens the implementation of mandates as a whole. Security, human rights and development must be considered holistically. If human rights are not protected, there is no security or any way to guarantee development for many countries and communities.

The reality in the field proves the need to focus on prevention, adopt comprehensive and coherent approaches, and be able to rely on mechanisms that prioritize human rights in efforts related to security, protection, politics, humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding and socioeconomic development.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are key for conflict management and may play a critical role in the promotion and protection of human rights. They contribute to strengthening the rule of law and fostering national reconciliation and unity, including through facilitating inclusive dialogue and mediation, access to justice and accountability. In conjunction with host countries, they can assist in promoting good governance, democracy, reliable institutions, gender equality

and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms — all conducive to sustaining peace.

I conclude by reiterating Guatemala's commitment to continuing to provide personnel of the highest degree of efficiency, competence and discipline to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Mindful of the relevant role of women as agents of change and peacebuilders, in accordance with resolution 1325 (2000), our country contributes both women and men committed to the cause of peace and security in the world.

Lastly, Guatemala wishes to pay tribute to all those who work in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and especially to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for this noble cause.

Annex 29

Statement by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

We thank Germany, the President of the Security Council for this month, for convening today's open debate via video-teleconference on peace operations and human rights.

Over the past seven decades, United Nations peace operations have evolved as an important tool for the international community to respond to armed conflicts that threaten international peace and security.

The mandates of United Nations peace operations have become increasingly complex over the years. United Nations missions are progressively called upon to facilitate political processes by promoting dialogue and reconciliation, protecting civilians and their human rights, and assisting in restoring the rule of law. Such robust mandates call for greater calibration of their terms of engagement in the field, the availability of adequate resources and clear and unambiguous recognition of the threats they face while performing their duties.

It is well recognized that all United Nations peace operations contribute to promoting respect for, and protection of, human rights through the fulfilment of their respective mandates. We need to understand the linkage between United Nations peace operations and human rights in the context of the specific mandate with which they are entrusted. It is therefore all the more important that the mandates of peace operations, whether with an explicit human rights component or not, remain context-specific.

Protection-of-civilian mandates in peace operations envisage working with the host Government and humanitarian actors to identify threats to civilians, implement existing prevention and response plans, and strengthen civil-military cooperation and joint planning. While the Council has been proactive in issuing such mandates, much remains to be desired with regard to clear terms of engagement and resource allocation for field operations.

It goes without saying that all United Nations peace operations are conducted with full respect for human rights. There should be zero tolerance for human rights abuses by United Nations personnel. United Nations personnel engaged in peace operations must be adequately trained and prepared to respond appropriately to human rights violations and abuses in accordance with their mandate and their competence. The use of force must be employed in accordance with necessity and proportionality and, above all, without endangering the cardinal principle of impartiality.

Observing those principles comes with obvious operational challenges, especially in situations where the non-State actors do not follow any principles, let alone those relating to human rights rules and norms. The Security Council must therefore be doubly careful in entrusting responsibilities to the peace operations. Overloading mandates runs the risk of compromising their effectiveness and credibility. Protecting the protectors is a key aspect that should be accorded due importance.

India has been a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations over past several decades. We wish to highlight several points based on our experience as a major troop- and police-contributing country.

First, on the question of training, the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping, in New Delhi, is providing predeployment training to all personnel prior to their induction, covering various aspects of human rights pertaining to the mission

environment. Those training modules are approved by the Integrated Training Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations of the United Nations.

Secondly, detailed screening of personnel is carried out to confirm that they have not been involved in any kind of misconduct.

Thirdly, in-mission training on human rights issues is being conducted in the field, focusing on the practical aspects of conducting peace operations while keeping in view the human rights perspective.

It has been our experience that military peacekeepers' knowledge of various aspects of fieldcraft is critical in assessing, observing and responding to human rights violations by armed actors across the spectrum. The Indian contingents and military observers are engaged in sharing information and escorting human rights teams. Contingents are maintaining area domination to facilitate the unimpeded operation of humanitarian agencies, while observers are undertaking joint field verification and reporting, in accordance with their mandates.

The presence of military peacekeepers in the field and access to local armed forces provide them with a unique comparative advantage and makes them a key partner in recording relevant human rights information. Their task, however, becomes extremely challenging if there are competing and multiple subcomponents of the mandate with limited resources.

Going forward, we would also like to highlight some gaps that need to be addressed in order to maintain the credibility, legitimacy and effectiveness of United Nations peace operations.

While adequate predeployment training is already being provided to troops and experts, given the dynamic nature of peacekeeping missions, what is needed is more focused situation-based in-mission training once they are deployed. In addition, effective coordination must be established both at strategic and tactical levels between human rights components and their civilian and uniformed colleagues. Mandates must be reprioritized after an assessment of the situation on the ground and adequate resources must be provided to support all mission components.

Respecting and protecting human rights in United Nations peace operations is non-derogable. It is not a question of whether but how. The Council needs a better understanding of the operational challenges on the ground in order to enable United Nations peace operations to deliver on their mandates, which seek to promote human rights.

Annex 30

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations

Ireland aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (see annex 25).

The promotion and protection of human rights is integral to peace and security, and is embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. Violations and abuses of all human rights — civil, political, economic, social and cultural — can be drivers of conflict. On the other hand, the respect for, and protection of, human rights can help prevent and end conflicts by contributing to addressing the root causes of instability.

With that in mind and as a long-standing troop-contributor, it is our firm belief that human rights are integral to our peacekeeping efforts. The upholding of human rights principles and the implementation of tasks in line with human rights principles and international human rights law applies to all United Nations peacekeeping operations, irrespective of whether there is a specific human rights component. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) increases the challenges of conflict and the vulnerability of people. We therefore congratulate Germany on its leadership and on prioritizing this agenda item throughout its Council membership. We also welcome today's briefings, as well as the continued engagement of High Commissioner Bachelet with the Security Council.

The new challenges for peacekeepers in reaching and protecting vulnerable populations in conflict, created by this pandemic, means that we must ensure that peacekeepers are fully supported and fully resourced in the implementation of their mandates, but most especially in relation to the protection of civilians and human rights. Human rights components play an indispensable role in peacekeeping operations, and we recognize the crucial contribution of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in supporting missions to fulfil their mandates. We must guard against disproportionate public health measures that impede the work of our missions or undermine human rights protections. Put simply, the implementation of emergency measures must not compromise human rights, which must remain at the heart of our responses to the pandemic, both globally and locally.

We know too that COVID-19 is making it more difficult for peacekeepers to interact with communities and individuals. It is important that we are innovative in supporting interaction and engagement with local populations and civil society. The voices of those key stakeholders are crucial to helping missions resolve conflict and make them as effective as possible in protecting human rights. Other capabilities, including strategic communications, outreach and engagement, civil-military cooperation and key leader engagement, should also be harnessed to address protection-of-civilian concerns and ensure the promotion and protection of human rights in a holistic and integrated manner.

Ensuring that peacekeeping missions fully incorporate human rights principles and mainstream human rights throughout their tasks demands standardized and contextualized predeployment training. Comprehensive training will enhance their performance and effectiveness at a time when we must seek increased accountability. The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative places particular emphasis on accountability. That is particularly important in relation to the issues of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers. Ireland has signed the voluntary compact on combating sexual exploitation and abuse, which contains a series of commitments by the United Nations and the relevant Member States to prevent or prosecute cases of sexual exploitation and/or abuse by personnel deployed within United Nations peacekeeping missions. Our commitment to those standards

has led to a whole-of-Government approach in implementing the provisions of the voluntary compact. There can be no impunity for those who violate or exploit the people they have been charged to protect.

Increasing the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping at all levels will also positively impact human rights protection within peacekeeping missions. The presence and skill sets of women peacekeepers and women protection officers within missions significantly impact a mission's ability to carry out its mandates with regard to the protection of civilians and conflict-related sexual violence. The role that women can play in the delivery of peace is key. We must recognize that role by ensuring their inclusion and that they are free to participate equally and meaningfully in the delivery of peace.

Ireland agrees fully with the Secretary-General's assertion that human rights are intrinsically linked to peace and security, and that their inclusion in the deliberations and decisions of the Security Council is of great importance. As an incoming member of the Security Council, we will seek to build on the important work done so far and further integrate human rights into our peacekeeping efforts.

Annex 31

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Italy to the United Nations

Italy aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (see annex 25) and would like to add a few remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the organization of this open debate and appreciate the initiative launched by Denmark for a study, conducted by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, on this important subject.

Human rights violations are both a root cause and a consequence of conflicts, and respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law is key to ensuring sustainable peace and security. As the Secretary-General recalled in *The Highest Aspiration: A call to action for human rights*, “[t]here is a well-documented correlation between a society’s enjoyment of and commitment to human rights ... and its resilience to crises.”

It is therefore an important achievement that human rights have constantly been addressed in Security Council’s mandates and represent a hallmark of United Nations peace operations. As the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping initiative clearly states, “lasting progress in strengthening security, national reconciliation, the rule of law, human rights and sustainable development needs to occur in parallel”.

Peacekeeping missions can effectively contribute to the realization of human rights. Most of the missions authorized by the Council carry out human rights tasks through their human rights components, by supporting political and peace processes, promoting conflict resolution and ensuring the protection of civilians. Their contribution in reporting violations, monitoring compliance, protecting and assisting vulnerable people and helping State institutions in building their own capacities is essential. It is therefore crucial that human rights components be adequately funded and have the capacity to carry out their tasks. The Security Council should ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations have clear and realistic mandates that include the protection of human rights. The General Assembly, for its part, should allocate adequate resources.

Our efforts in strengthening the impact of peacekeeping operations on the protection of civilians must continue, in fulfilment of the commitments we undertook in the framework of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. To that end, peacekeepers must be adequately trained and equipped in order to fully implement their protection-of-civilians mandate. As the top western troop-contributing country for peacekeeping operations, Italy promptly endorsed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians, and we invite other Member States to follow suit. We believe that effective protection of civilians requires properly trained troops, adequate equipment and strong political commitment. Since 2005, Italy has trained, through the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Unit in Vicenza, more than 10,000 police personnel, many of whom are deployed in peacekeeping operations in Africa. We will continue to play our part in providing training and offering capacity-building to military, police and judicial officers from all over the world.

Italy also supports the incorporation of gender policies and women’s rights perspectives into United Nations peace operations as a cross-cutting dimension in the implementation of their mandates, including through the deployment of gender advisers. Our experience on the ground, especially in southern Lebanon, shows that the interaction between female peacekeepers and local women populations is always productive and conducive to a better environment. The creation of uniformed

women's networks must also be seen as a mechanism through which dialogue with female organizations in the host country can be successfully fostered.

Prevention should always be prioritized, in particular with regard to vulnerable groups, such as children. Child protection should be mainstreamed into the mandates of all United Nations peacekeeping operations, starting from targeted specialized predeployment trainings of peacekeepers, a practice that Italy is spearheading and supporting at the Centre in Vicenza. We must also ensure that child protection adviser positions in United Nations operations are duly staffed and resourced, so that they have the means to monitor, report and respond to grave violations.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a human crisis of unprecedented scale, seriously affecting the health and profoundly disrupting the livelihoods and overall well-being of people all over the world. In addition, it is gravely impacting the enjoyment of human rights. United Nations field missions, through their human rights components, can meaningfully contribute to responding to that challenge. It is our duty as Member States to fully support that endeavour.

Annex 32**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali**

We thank Germany and Ms. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, German Federal Minister of Defence, for holding this debate at a time when human rights are under great pressure, multilateralism is facing its most serious challenge and peace is under threat everywhere in the world — making peacekeeping a necessity.

Whether clearly stipulated in their mandate or not, peace operations protect and promote human rights every day. As Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, has explained:

“We should not forget that our peacekeepers — civilian, police, men and women, military personnel — are saving lives every day. They are protecting civilians ... It is important to recognize the added value of peacekeeping and what we bring to the societies and nations that are destabilized.”

As a country hosting a peacekeeping mission, we can testify to the impact of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in terms of human rights. Present in Lebanon since 1978, over the decades UNIFIL has contributed to the protection of countless civilian lives that otherwise would have been lost. Outreach by UNIFIL personnel to the local population has proved useful and impactful, particularly through quick-impact projects that provide better access to basic services for the local population.

States bear the primary responsibility for ensuring respect for human rights for their citizens, but peacekeepers have a role to play in protecting human rights. Enhanced coordination and dialogue among host countries, the population and the leadership of peacekeeping missions are paramount to the safety of mission personnel and to their ability to perform their duties to protect civilians, thereby helping them to attain the main basic right to be safe and to live in peace.

That entails granting peacekeeping missions the necessary means, human and financial, to perform their mandate, with the necessary predeployment training to carry it out, especially if it includes human rights elements. Moreover, the full backing and support of the Security Council members for peacekeeping missions are indispensable to the implementation of their mandates. Nothing is more effective than the unity of the Security Council in upholding international law and acting as a deterrent to human rights violators in an area of conflict.

Those who violate human rights depend on divisions within the international community to continue committing human rights atrocities with impunity. The Security Council should deprive the violators of this tool by uniting around human rights as one of the most important tasks of any operation that has the word peace as part of its name.

Human rights are intrinsically linked to peace and security. There can be neither peace nor security in the absence of human rights or when these rights are trampled. This makes it essential that peacekeeping missions monitor human rights abuses and support the vulnerable, especially women and children.

Women have proved to be a great asset to peacekeeping missions for many reasons. They are easy to approach and bond with; they are trusted, which makes them more effective in dealing with the host community; and they empower women and girls by their mere presence. As the world celebrates the twentieth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), on women and peace and security, we need to acknowledge

the important role that women peacekeepers have played, and play every day, in promoting human rights to allow for real peace and sustained security to take hold.

Lebanon is grateful to have one of the most successful peace operations — UNIFIL. The UNIFIL leadership understood early on the importance of working with the local population, not only to help them preserve their most important right to live in peace but also to assist them in making their daily lives more sustainable through environmental, health and educational projects.

Women peacekeepers in UNIFIL play an important role as a bridge with the local community, where trust is indispensable for implementing the mandate. The access that the population, especially children, have to United Nations information and educational training teach the children about their rights and about the importance of working together in the community, as well as with the peacekeepers to preserve peace.

There is no peace and security without preserving human rights and the basic rights to live in peace and in liberty, free of fear or want. Peacekeeping operations should keep this as the most important task to inform the implementation of their mandates. A security approach alone can bring neither peace nor security.

Annex 33**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires ad interim Liechtenstein to the United Nations, Myriam Oehri**

Liechtenstein thanks you, Mr. President, for this timely debate. Respect for human rights and maintaining international peace and security are two of the purposes enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. There is a particularly close and practical link between the two in the context of peace operations, as situations of armed conflict often jeopardize the enjoyment of human rights. We continue to see alarming trends of parties to conflict increasingly violating or outright ignoring international law, including international human rights law and humanitarian law.

Human rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. The failure to uphold these rights for the most vulnerable weakens the enjoyment of human rights for all. Accordingly, the mandates of all United Nations peace operations, one of the international community's key tools for addressing and overcoming conflict, should systematically include clear human rights and rule of law components if they are to effectively contribute to sustaining peace and thus fulfil the Security Council's and the membership's aspirations. In that context, the wide divergence in mandates among different peace operations is concerning. In addition, in order to more effectively address human rights violations as part of its peace and security mandate, the Security Council itself must better coordinate with the human rights machinery of the United Nations, in particular the Human Rights Council, relevant special mandate holders and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

For mandates of peace operations to be successful, it is of the utmost importance to employ personnel with relevant expertise and experience and to ensure appropriate training. It also requires ensuring sufficient resources for special advisers. This applies in particular to child protection mandates, which have been at risk of being underfunded or cut despite the many human rights violations against children in armed conflict and post-conflict situations. In 2019 alone, grave violations against children in armed conflict amounted to around 25,000. The United Nations verified almost 500 attacks on schools in 2019, many of which were unprovoked. Schools continue to be used for military purposes, eroding their sanctity as safe spaces and exposing schools, teachers and students to attack. Such attacks violate the right to education and often constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity. Depriving children of access to education also has a devastating impact on sustainable development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 4, and inflicts irreparable long-term damage on children, families, communities and societies.

Sufficient funding and training are also necessary for gender expert mandates in peace operations. Liechtenstein is deeply concerned about the high occurrence of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls, as well as men and boys. Such violence is often underreported owing to the fear of stigmatization and cultural taboos, in particular when perpetrated against men and boys, as also documented by the All Survivors Project. A culture of silence continues to impede accountability and justice, and it contributes to further cycles of violence and persistent harmful gender stereotypes. It is therefore key that the monitoring, analysis and reporting arrangements on conflict-related sexual violence, including in the context of peace operations, focus more consistently on the gender-specific nature of sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations against all affected populations in all situations of concern, including men and boys.

Peace operations themselves must be carried out in strict compliance with a zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, and accountability needs

to be strengthened for crimes of that kind. In times of quarantines, lockdowns and other restrictions on movement caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, it is particularly important to ensure that victims and survivors of human rights violations have access to reporting mechanisms and necessary services.

States have to comply with their legal obligations and standards enshrined in international human rights instruments. Where they fail to do so, justice must be served for the victims and survivors of human rights abuses. But justice mechanisms, at both the national and international levels, exist not only to ensure accountability but also to prevent violations from occurring in the first place. Deterrence is a key preventive tool, which must be harnessed. In that respect, we reiterate that the International Criminal Court (ICC) remains the central institution in the global criminal justice system.

In that regard, it is particularly important that the Security Council support the work of the Court by ensuring full cooperation and enforcement, in particular regarding situations that it has itself referred to the ICC. Such cooperation includes sharing information and assisting States in protecting witnesses and executing arrest warrants. In that context, we recall that the Relationship Agreement between the United Nations and the International Criminal Court provides a framework for cooperation between the United Nations, including the Council, and the ICC and regulates such cooperation.

In addition, we commend the leaders of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic for their cooperation with the Court to secure the arrest, surrender and transfer to the ICC of Mr. Ali Kushayb, who is suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity allegedly committed in Darfur, a situation that was referred to the ICC by the Security Council. This is a welcome development, which also demonstrates the immense potential the Security Council would have at its disposal to advance justice and human rights, and thereby peace, if it put its mind to it.

Annex 34**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Lithuania to the United Nations**

We commend Germany, as President of the Security Council for the month of July, for convening this important and historic debate. We also thank all the briefers for their valuable insights and contributions to the debate.

Lithuania aligns itself with the statement submitted on behalf of the European Union (see annex 25).

In January 2015, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Lithuania organized an Arria Formula meeting on the human rights component in United Nations peace operations. We are delighted to see this very topic addressed in a formal Security Council debate. This is a significant and long-needed step forward in bringing discussions on the human rights dimension within United Nations peace operations to the formal setting of the Council.

United Nations peace missions operate in increasingly diverse contexts due to the continuously evolving nature of conflicts and diverging intent and interests of State and non-State actors, as well as internal and external pressures on Governments. Yet one thing is abundantly clear — today's conflicts are often rooted in social, political, economic and cultural inequalities and human rights issues are at the heart of many conflicts. The multidimensional aspect is the reason that human rights teams in peacekeeping operations are abundantly important. We need not only to maintain the existing human rights teams in United Nations missions in Mali, the Central African Republic and the Sudan but also to ensure that human rights teams work in each and every peacekeeping operation on the ground. To address the topic of today's debate, Lithuania would like to emphasize three points: first, human rights as a key element in conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies; secondly, human rights training of peacekeepers; and, thirdly, the protection of women.

First, the promotion and protection of human rights are directly linked to the concept of conflict prevention. Many of the worst human rights violations and abuses are at the root of conflict situations, and impunity, as well as armed confrontation, fuel new cycles of violations. When egregious violations of human rights take place, conflict becomes inevitable. Any effort to build a lasting peace must incorporate actions to remedy the effects of violations, protect from new abuses and enable the population to exercise their fundamental rights and freedoms. In such a context, the protection and promotion of human rights should be seen as a key aspect for the success of United Nations peace operations. At the same time, human rights are a powerful advocacy tool for peace missions, as they are instrumental in addressing the root causes of conflict and setting a country on the path towards a sustainable peace through dialogue with national actors. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic is a good example of how local community engagement allows missions to be consistent in ensuring the integration of human rights into national peace and political processes.

Secondly, all peacekeepers should be fully apprised of international human rights law and its applicability to their daily tasks. Human rights work cannot remain the sole responsibility of the human rights component within the peace operation, but rather should become an integral part of the duties of the entire mission staff. While we acknowledge that both predeployment and in-mission training programmes have significantly improved over the past couple of years, we need to prioritize further human rights training of peacekeepers at the institutional level. When looking at the area of training, human rights is one topic in a long list of peacekeeping-related issues. A more substantial reflection process on human rights training programmes

for peacekeeping is needed, along with the political will to prioritize and adequately resource the area of training.

Thirdly, in today's conflicts, women and girls suffer human rights violations in a disproportionate way. Awareness of gender issues in modern conflicts is crucial for peacekeepers to fulfil their roles and perform their deployment tasks properly. Women should not only be seen as victims but rather more often recognized as agents of change and included in decision-making processes. Moreover, improving their social, economic and political conditions should be an integral part of protection strategies, together with their active participation in conflict prevention and resolution. It is also about addressing structural gender-related vulnerabilities. In order to overcome the many remaining challenges with regard to gender equality and gender mainstreaming, it is important to expand cooperation among peace operations, local government, local organizations and civil society. There is the example of the productive cooperation of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the authorities of the Democratic Republic of Congo in combating sexual violence and ensuring accountability for crimes. By addressing specific issues, we create a positive environment for broader changes.

Finally, we would like to note that the challenges for the staff of United Nations peace operations, both uniformed and civilian, are enormous and, with the arrival of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), a new dimension has been added. We are pleased to see that the COVID-19 pandemic in most missions is being managed rather successfully. Yet, despite the relatively low infection rates, the situation on the ground has certainly not become any easier. We would like to express our appreciation to all the staff of United Nations peace operations, who continue their dedicated work under very difficult circumstances.

Annex 35**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations**

I begin by thanking the German presidency of the Security Council for organizing today's open debate on this important issue. As stated by Secretary-General António Guterres, human rights are intrinsically linked to peace and security. The Security Council and the whole international community should keep that connection in mind at all times.

Malta aligns itself with the statement submitted by the European Union (see annex 25) and would like to underline a few points in its national capacity.

Human rights are a crucial pillar of the United Nations, and their importance is highlighted in a number of instances in the Action for Peacekeeping initiative. We are pleased to note that human rights are being increasingly recognized and incorporated as a key element of peacekeeping, as they provide a solid foundation on which to build healthy, inclusive and resilient societies.

While the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with host States, Malta also recognizes the fact that peacekeeping operations can offer a valid and mutually beneficial contribution in this field when mandated to do so. As human rights violations are an indicator of armed conflict and instability, having effective and reliable early-warning mechanisms in place is of fundamental importance.

Peacekeeping missions also have a role to play in supporting the efforts of local Governments to address human rights issues in a number of areas, including intercommunal violence, arbitrary detention, forced disappearances and access to justice. Malta is keen to stress the role they have in addressing the violation of rights of vulnerable people, in particular women and children. We take this opportunity to reiterate that we are deeply concerned about reports of increased violence against women and children around the world since the start of the coronavirus disease pandemic, and we echo the Secretary-General's call for the effective implementation of the women and peace and security agenda.

Malta underscores once again the importance that it attaches to justice and accountability when it comes to human rights violations. Such heinous acts cannot go unpunished, and justice must prevail for parties to reconcile and for peace to succeed. Peace without justice is fragile, and history has shown us that it is only a matter of time until another round of conflict breaks out if there is no closure. In that connection, Malta highlights the need to empower local populations and provide them with the necessary information for them to assert their human rights.

Peacekeepers have an increasingly important role to play when it comes to actions in the field of human rights. In view of that, we must also ensure that they are being provided with adequate training and the necessary tools — including new technology — in order for them to be able to fully implement their mandate. We must also ensure that they meet the highest standards when serving in United Nations peacekeeping missions. Malta is pleased to note that the human rights sections of peacekeeping operations continue to build and develop their expertise when it comes to addressing human rights issues with local Governments.

In conclusion, Malta would also like to highlight the importance of partnerships with civil society organizations, which are essential and uniquely positioned to offer a local perspective and sensitize peacekeepers on local customs and traditions. They can also serve as a strong link between peacekeeping missions and local populations, and help build trust and strengthen cooperation between the two sides. Their insights and close connections to local communities are invaluable, as ultimately any peace process must be a domestic effort that includes all segments of society.

Annex 36**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Morocco to the United Nations, Omar Hilale**

[Original: French]

First of all, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on the organization of this debate on a noble theme — peace operations and human rights. Your statement also demonstrates your country's unwavering commitment to the protection of human rights in peace operations.

I also take this opportunity to thank Ms. Bachelet for her comprehensive briefing and her leadership as the head of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. In that regard, I would like to pay special tribute to the work carried out by her Office, particularly in the field. I would also like to thank Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga, President of the non-governmental organization Groupe LOTUS, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for their particularly relevant interventions.

Peace operations play a crucial role in promoting international peace and security. In that context, allow me to share with the following five points.

Peace operations play an important role in building the capacities of host States, because in the end, just like the protection of civilians, respect for human rights is primarily the responsibility of national authorities. Strengthening national mechanisms for the promotion and protection of human rights is therefore an important investment in ensuring long-term respect for those rights beyond the presence of peace operations, whose mandate will come to an end.

Civil society engagement remains crucial for the respect of human rights, particularly for the most vulnerable segments of the population, especially women and children, as confirmed by the testimony of Mr. Kitenge. Capacity-building is key to enabling missions to better fulfil their mandate and contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Morocco welcomes the efforts made by the United Nations to strengthen support for vulnerable populations — for example, through the use of mixed units and the creation of specific mission posts, such as gender advisers and child protection advisers. It is indeed important that peace operations be able to deploy adequate means to ensure specific protection for women and children, who are often the first victims of serious human rights violations.

Morocco, a fervent defender of human rights, spares no effort to ensure that the troops it deploys in peacekeeping operations are trained to carry out their mandate in the best possible conditions, including in the area of human rights. To that end, Moroccan soldiers receive specific training in international humanitarian law and international human rights law, in particular the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1976 and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment of 1987, as part of their in-service training. The Royal Moroccan Armed Forces also conduct strict profile checks on all soldiers before they are selected for deployment. Finally, predeployment training based on United Nations manuals is provided to all personnel.

Morocco was one of the first troop-contributing countries to systematically integrate national investigators into its contingents. That integration was part of the country's measures to effectively combat sexual exploitation and abuse and has

since been considered a good practice, recommended by the Secretariat to all troop-contributing countries.

In conclusion, I would like to stress the imperative of promoting and strengthening national human rights mechanisms, in particular national human rights institutions. The latter, when they are credible and independent and comply with the Paris Principles, are the most appropriate means to promote and protect human rights. They are in a position to contribute to national efforts to ensure and defend those rights. In addition, the United Nations should make use of the human rights mechanisms at its disposal, such as the Universal Periodic Review and the special procedures of the Human Rights Council, as well as the human rights treaty-monitoring bodies, which play a significant role in strengthening national human rights efforts.

Annex 37**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, Amrit Bahadur Rai**

I would like to thank the German presidency of the Security Council for organizing this open debate. I also thank Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the other briefers for their insightful presentations.

When the first peacekeeping mission was established, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was being drafted by a committee set up by the United Nations. Since then, human rights have constituted a core function of United Nations peace operations, whether explicitly mentioned in mission mandates or not.

The critical role played by United Nations peace operations in the protection and promotion of human rights cannot be overemphasized. Without ensuring people's basic rights to life and dignity, peace has no real value. Peace cannot flourish or be sustained where there are rampant violations and abuses of human rights. In fact, peace materializes through human rights.

Countries have the primary responsibility to protect and promote the rights of their civilians. The rights of special groups such as children, women and older people require special attention.

The international community, including United Nations peace operations, should support the efforts of national Governments. Human rights violations and abuses should not be used as a means to achieve political ends. Its perpetrators must be held accountable in all circumstances.

Peace operations face certain challenges in their efforts on the ground to protect the human rights of civilians. First, peace operations often cannot physically cover the numerous hotspots throughout a country. Secondly, overcrowded internally displaced persons camps are breeding grounds for human rights violations and crimes. Thirdly, national security forces tend to lack the necessary training and infrastructure to instil confidence in the locale population. Their weakness impedes the effectiveness of the joint operations conducted by peace missions and national security forces.

Lastly, the question of the impartiality of peace operations also mars their effectiveness since armed groups consider joint operations between the peace operations and the national security forces as an act of partiality that gives an unfair advantage to national forces. That perception prevents armed groups from coordinating and working with peace operations to uphold civilian rights.

As the fourth major troop- and police-contributing country, Nepal is aware of its responsibility to uphold the human rights of civilians. Nepal has endorsed the Action for Peacekeeping joint Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians. Similarly, it has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against sexual exploitation and abuse on the ground.

Nepal is also committed to providing well-trained and well-equipped uniformed personnel. Predeployment courses cover human rights law and international humanitarian law, including child protection, the protection of civilians, sexual exploitation and abuse and conflict-related sexual violence. Nepal also conducts weekly in-mission trainings for all its troops on the issue of human rights.

My country is also committed to increasing the number of female peacekeepers in order to meet the United Nations goal of gender parity. It has also been deploying female engagement teams in formed units and gender focal points in battalions.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the centrality of human rights in United Nations peace operations. We call upon troop- and police-contributing countries, host countries, the United Nations and other international partners to work in unison to ensure the protection and promotion of the human rights of civilians in peace operations.

Annex 38**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the United Nations, Karel J.G. van Oosterom**

We are grateful to Germany for organizing today's debate. The participation of the German Federal Minister of Defence and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights shows the importance of this topic.

We are also grateful to Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, for sharing his experiences and lessons learned from the field.

We align ourselves with the statement submitted by the observer of the European Union (see annex 25).

The Charter of the United Nations, which celebrates its seventy-fifth anniversary this year, shows us that promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is central to the mandate of the United Nations. Human rights are under pressure around the world. Today's debate is therefore very timely and relevant.

Earlier this year, the Secretary-General issued *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights*, in which he emphasized that respect for human rights is essential in crises. Beyond being the most effective conflict prevention mechanism, human rights are at the core of rebuilding stable and peaceful societies. In essence, ensuring respect for human rights is the ultimate prevention agenda.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the measures taken to combat it are putting increased pressure on the enjoyment of human rights worldwide. While securing the right to health, we must stand together to defend other rights as well, such as the freedom of expression. We must maintain the space for civil society and human rights defenders to voice their opinions and concerns. In addition, we must unite to protect vulnerable groups, including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex persons, religious and ethnic minorities, and women and girls; and we must also engage with them when shaping those policies.

Peace operations have a key role to play in the promotion and protection of human rights. The protection of civilians is mandated in most peacekeeping missions, and five out of 13 peacekeeping operations have been specifically tasked by the Security Council to assist host nations in delivering human rights to their citizens.

Despite significant progress made since the establishment of the first human rights component in a field mission almost 30 ago today, many challenges persist. In this statement, I would like to focus on three points, namely, achievable mandates and adequate resources, integrated approaches and partnerships, and training on human rights and related concepts.

On mandates and resources, the Security Council is tasked with establishing the mandates of peace operations. Members of the Council have often highlighted the importance of human rights as a key component of peacekeeping operations. However, human rights are often a contentious issue in mandate negotiations.

The conclusions from the Brahimi report (see S/2000/809), which called for properly equipped and resourced peacekeeping operations and clear, credible and achievable mandates remain as valid today as they were 20 years ago. We therefore call upon Council members to step up their efforts to negotiate clear, focused, sequenced, prioritized and achievable mandates, as we promised to do when endorsing the joint Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. As the Council is aware, the Declaration — endorsed by 153 countries — supports

the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which he kicked off at an event during the presidency of the Kingdom of the Netherlands of the Security Council in March 2018.

Last week, the Fifth Committee adopted the peacekeeping budget for the year 2020-2021. Throughout the negotiations, there was a powerful pushback against human rights and gender components of peacekeeping missions. We do not view that as a matter of ideology. Rather, it is a matter of effectiveness.

It is important to analyse the causes of conflicts and to gain insights in the way forward to sustainable peace. Then, it is up to Member States to provide missions with the necessary tools to assist in improving the lives of the people concerned, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of those operations.

Peacekeepers too often lack the specialized knowledge, practical skills and time to effectively respond to human rights violations and abuses. Dedicated expertise is required to support all mission components in carrying out their human rights responsibilities. That is where human rights advisers come in.

Most multidimensional peace operations nowadays have a human rights team tasked with, among other things, monitoring and documenting human rights violations, assisting with other mission tasks and helping national authorities to carry out their human rights responsibilities and uphold the rule of law.

Let us take a look at what that capacity looks like in practice. Currently, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights employs no more than three dozen human rights advisers around the globe. In the same vein, we cannot expect that the Human Rights and Protection Division of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) is able to counter all violations and abuses in a country that makes up an area of over 1,000,000 square kilometres.

Bearing in mind the complex situations in which peace operations are conducted, it is evident that the burden cannot be carried by dedicated human rights teams alone. An effective response to human rights violations requires the involvement of all mission components, the wider United Nations system, as well as external partners.

First of all, an effective response to human rights violations requires a fully integrated, coordinated and comprehensive approach. Both the uniformed and civilian components of peace operations must play a role in the promotion and protection of human rights. That includes the United Nations police, in its operational and advisory roles. In order to effectively carry out human rights responsibilities, all mission personnel must have an overall understanding of international human rights and humanitarian law and receive adequate training on prevention and response before deployment.

Secondly, the Netherlands is a strong supporter of enhancing cross-pillar cooperation for reinforcing the promotion and protection of human rights. The United Nations system needs to work more coherently and in an integrated and comprehensive manner to effectively address human rights violations, prevent conflict and build peace.

The Joint United Nations Development Programme-Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Programme on Building National Capacities for Conflict Prevention is a signature example of successful cross-pillar cooperation. Peace and development advisers play a crucial role in linking the work of the peace, development and human rights pillars of the United Nations.

Thirdly, I want to underline that the scale and nature of human rights challenges can be met only through close strategic and operational partnerships with host Governments, regional organizations, humanitarian organizations and local civil society groups and other key stakeholders.

Resolution 2447 (2018), which the Kingdom of the Netherlands initiated together with Côte d'Ivoire during our 2018 membership of the Security Council, provides an ongoing mandate for United Nations support in order to strengthen the national machinery for the administration of justice in any given operation. The resolution stresses national ownership and the role civil society can play.

That brings me to my third point — training. The Action for Peacekeeping agenda shows the connectedness between the promotion of human rights and protection of civilians. As an Action for Peacekeeping champion on protection, one of our priorities is to contribute to making available context-specific, mandate-specific and scenario-based predeployment training.

For years now, we have been organizing protection-of-civilian training in cooperation with the United States Africa Command and Rwanda. In those trainings, we focus on improving knowledge and practical skills in the area of protection, human rights and gender.

The Netherlands uses the core predeployment training materials of the United Nations as the core resource for our predeployment trainings. Therefore, among other subjects, human rights are integrated in our predeployment training. After the predeployment training, participants are able to identify human rights violations and abuses, can explain United Nations policies on human rights and can identify human rights-related roles in a mission and know which actions to take when human rights abuses and violations are being observed. That enhances the capacity of Blue Helmets to act when human rights violations and abuses occur in front of their eyes.

During our deployment in MINUSMA, we encountered a local population that was greatly concerned about improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In order to increase the ability of civilians to protect themselves from IEDs, an information campaign was launched. It resulted in an increased number of reports on IED locations, which has saved lives.

Furthermore, we believe that peace is sustainable only when women are actively involved in peacebuilding. This is why we applaud the appointment of gender advisers in United Nations peace operations. By providing active guidance on gender to missions' military components, the protection of women and children is increasingly promoted at the operational and tactical level. The Netherlands has actively contributed to that development, inter alia, by deploying a gender adviser to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

To further improve the inclusion and mainstreaming of gender in missions, it is paramount for troops to be trained on the subject. To facilitate that, the Netherlands and Spain have been organizing a gender-in-operations course since 2011. That international course is open to the military, civil society and diplomats. It is held twice a year in Europe and twice a year, in cooperation with the United States Africa Command, in Kenya, for participants from the African continent.

Practical tools for preventing and addressing sexual exploitation and abuse must be addressed within predeployment training. Contributing to the training of peacekeepers in the areas of human rights, protection of civilians and gender is one of the most effective ways to counter threats to human rights and security in the volatile situations in which peacekeepers operate.

In conclusion, there are various ways in which we, as individual States Members of the United Nations, can contribute to enhancing the effective promotion and protection of human rights by peace operations.^[P]~~[SPP]~~ We believe that adequate resources, realistic mandates, strong partnerships and practical training on human rights and related topics are essential for ensuring that peacekeeping operations effectively contribute to the enjoyment of human rights by the local population. In times of COVID-19, that has not become any easier for United Nations personnel on the ground. That is all the more reason to stand by them and give them the tools they need to effectively implement their mandates.

Annex 39**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Peru to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We would like to welcome the initiative of the German presidency to convene this high-level debate, and to thank it for the concept note (S/2020/571, annex) that invites us to reflect on the importance of strengthening the integration of the human rights perspective into peace operations as a fundamental way of ensuring the protection of civilians in conflict zones. We particularly welcome the presence of the German Federal Minister of Defence and the lucid presentations of the speakers.

Peacekeeping is a process that is constantly adapting to the way in which conflicts develop. In recent decades, we have witnessed and participated in major changes in the international system, which have brought about greater complexity in matters of peace and security. That has required the United Nations to rethink the way it organizes peacekeeping operations.

In this evolutionary process, Peru strongly supports efforts to strengthen the role of peace operations in the defence, promotion and protection of human rights in the various scenarios in which they operate. I would like to highlight some elements that could help in that regard.

First, with regard to interaction with civil society, we consider it essential to bring contingents closer to local communities and civil society organizations in order to understand their needs in detail and to cultivate a relationship of trust. Only a close link with the population will allow a more comprehensive knowledge of potential or actual situations of human rights violations in conflict contexts.

Secondly, we must emphasize the importance of preventive approaches by strengthening the analytical capacities of operations. To that end, it may be particularly useful to hold periodic informal meetings within the Council to learn about and examine in greater depth, from a regional and rotational perspective, possible scenarios of human rights violations.

Thirdly, we stress the importance of training. Respect for and the promotion of, human rights is a cross-cutting issue in all mandates, and Peru believes that it should be considered in all field missions when it comes to policy, guidance and training of civilian and military personnel.

It is crucial that contributing countries provide specialized training to contingents that are ready to be deployed in the areas of international humanitarian law, promotion of the rule of law, human rights and sexual violence, in line with the Secretary-General's zero-tolerance policy. Similarly, troop-contributing countries must have up-to-date and accurate information on the expectations, challenges and specific requirements of a given operation.

Fourthly, we also believe that it is essential to create oversight and accountability mechanisms that will make it possible to duly investigate and punish those responsible for violations in this area. Impunity only exacerbates conflict and contributes to the normalization of contempt for human rights.

Fifthly, we underscore the importance of women. We would like to emphasize that the necessary interaction with the civilian population and the promotion of preventive and inclusive approaches make greater participation by women personnel in peace operations indispensable. Peru has been increasing the presence of women in the seven missions in which we participate, which today represent about 20 per

cent of the personnel deployed in the field. We continue to work to make further progress in that area.

In conclusion, I reaffirm our commitment to United Nations peacekeeping operations, as well as our willingness to continue contributing troops that are duly trained, disciplined, respectful of the populations of the countries that host them and committed to the promotion and protection of human rights.

Annex 40**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Francisco Duarte Lopes**

Portugal aligns itself with the statement submitted by the observer of the European Union (see annex 25) and would like to add some remarks.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was issued in 1948, the same year in which the first United Nations peacekeeping mission was established. Despite that auspicious coincidence, it took decades before the creation of the first human rights component of a peace operation.

Since then, human rights components have played an essential role in promoting and protecting human rights, fighting against impunity for gross human rights violations and abuses, and laying the foundation for long-lasting, sustainable peace. With that in mind, during our most recent presence as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Portugal highlighted the close link between concrete actions to enhance peace and security and the protection of human rights.

Human rights should be taken into account at all stages of conflict, from addressing human rights violations and abuses as one of the root causes of conflicts to protecting civilians during the deployment of operations, as well as in the pursuit of political solutions. In that respect, we highlight the importance of collaborating with civil society, especially regarding the reporting of human rights violations.

Women are fundamental drivers of change. It is therefore essential, as set in resolution 1325 (2000), to include women in conflict-prevention, management and resolution mechanisms, as well as in the promotion of peace and security. This year, we celebrate the twentieth anniversary of that resolution, which is an opportunity to increase our efforts to further integrate a gender perspective into peacekeeping.

The protection of children in armed conflict is also pivotal. With regard to the recruitment or use of children in conflict, we would like to point out the need to work towards the implementation of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers.

Moreover, we would like to highlight the particularly long-lasting effect of attacks on schools, which put at risk the future of entire generations. Safeguarding educational opportunities is therefore crucial to preventing child recruitment, as well as early and forced marriages.

Specialized and dedicated personnel in peace operations is fundamental to mainstreaming women and peace and security and children and armed conflict considerations into the fulfilment of all mandated tasks. Moreover, all elements — civil, police and military personnel — of peace operations should pool efforts and resources, including through joint training.

The coronavirus disease aggravates the situation of millions of people already affected by the scourge of war. In that context, we applaud the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire.

We would also like to point out our responsibilities as troop- and police-contributing countries with regard to our performance in the fulfilment of protection-of-civilians and human rights mandates. The Portuguese Quick Reaction Force in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic operates without caveats and has an important role in protecting civilians, in accordance with the Mission's mandate of preventing massacres against civilians. Moreover, our police forces are also involved in joint patrols and capacity-building activities, drawing attention to human rights and gender issues, as well as

cautioning local police forces about the need of a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation and abuse.

Those activities build on the importance we attach to predeployment training. Portuguese military and police personnel meet the highest standards of training, with a strong emphasis on international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as well as the protection of civilians, the United Nations code of conduct and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

To conclude, as the Secretary-General has pointed out in *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights*, the best form of protection from different threats is to avert such threats in the first place. With that in mind, we call for the increased participation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the work of the Security Council. This would improve the Council's early warning work and reinforce the prevention agenda.

Annex 41**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

Allow me to first express my gratitude for Germany's leadership in convening today's timely and relevant open video-teleconference of the Security Council on peace operations and human rights. The Republic of Korea offers its deep appreciation to Her Excellency Ms. Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, German Federal Minister of Defence, for presiding over the meeting today. My delegation also thanks Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; and the civil society representative for their enlightening briefings.

The coronavirus disease pandemic is having far-reaching implications that cut across all aspects of human life, undermining social cohesion, increasing the risks of instability and violence and subsequently affecting the operating context for peace operations. At the same time, however, it also serves as an opportunity to promote thorough discussions on the nexus between the two pillars: peace and security and human rights. Today, my delegation would like to emphasize the following three points with a view to enhancing the role of United Nations peace operations in the context of the protection of human rights.

First, we believe that the effective implementation of mandates, including the protection of civilians grounded in the protection and promotion of human rights, is dependent on adequate resources, well-organized predeployment and in-mission training. This is the reason that the Government of the Republic of Korea has focused on training programmes to deploy well-prepared and appropriately equipped personnel in its units. For instance, it has designated a child protection adviser in its units to contribute to the delivery of protection-of-civilian mandates on the ground.

Secondly, in the pandemic situation, we would like to highlight the importance of incorporating the latest technological developments into planning and monitoring operations to fully and effectively implement protection-of-civilian mandates. We also underscore the growing importance of access to technology in encouraging the further participation of more stakeholders. It is the key to ensuring people's engagement in the continuum of peace processes so that the needs of all segments of society are taken into account. Bearing in mind the double-edged characteristics of technology, we must maximize the positive aspects of new technology. In that regard, my Government welcomes the initiative taken by the Secretariat to establish a panel of experts on digital technology and United Nations peace operations.

Thirdly, the meaningful participation of women at all levels of United Nations peacekeeping operations at Headquarters and in field missions not only is a final goal in itself but also benefits the operational effectiveness and mandate implementation of each mission. We also emphasize the need to prioritize the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence as an important component of protection-of-civilian mandates. The Republic of Korea, for its part, will continue to deliver on the women and peace and security agenda to ensure that women's rights are incorporated into the relevant planning and implementation of peacekeeping operations. We will increase the representation of our female peacekeeping officers and observers to 25 per cent by the year 2028.

The Republic of Korea will redouble its peacekeeping efforts, especially in the areas of training, capabilities and women. My delegation would like to reaffirm its commitment to working alongside the United Nations, as well as all Member States, in improving the effective implementation of mandates, including the protection

of civilians grounded in the protection and promotion of human rights. In that connection, we look forward to developing this discussion at the 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial, to be held in Seoul on 8 and 9 April.

Annex 42**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Senegal to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

Allow me first to welcome the convening of this pertinent open debate on United Nations peace operations and human rights, presided over by Her Excellency Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, Federal Minister of Defence of Germany.

The meeting that brings us together today is a continuation of the tireless efforts of Secretary-General António Guterres to make peacekeeping operations an effective tool for conflict prevention and the protection of populations, in keeping with the spirit of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative.

My delegation followed with great interest the excellent briefings by Ms. Michelle Bachelet, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mr. David Shearer, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, and the civil society representative, who provided a comprehensive update of the matter under consideration.

Respect for human rights in the deployment areas of United Nations peace missions is a key factor in evaluating a peace operation. The credibility of missions depends on it, particularly for the local population, whose cooperation is essential to the success of a mission. The strong resentment of the United Nations following the failed peace operations in Rwanda, parts of the former Yugoslavia and Somalia in the 1990s is sufficient proof that the success of a mission depends to a large extent on its capacity to protect and promote human rights.

Strongly convinced of that paradigm, my delegation can only welcome the inclusion of human rights teams as an integral part of peacekeeping operations. We therefore look forward with great interest to the results of the study, which seeks to optimize the contribution of the human rights component to peace missions.

In its 2015 conclusions, the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations appointed by the Secretary-General strongly recommended that human rights be placed at the heart of the work of peacekeeping operations (see S/2015/446). It is gratifying to note that since then, the Secretariat has taken ownership of that recommendation, which the A4P initiative fully embodies. Like my colleagues, whose relevant contributions I commend by the way, I would therefore like to share these few lines of thought.

First, the issue of human rights should be better addressed by the Security Council in the drafting of mandates. Divisions within that decision-making organ often give rise to disagreements on the subject, thereby depriving the mission concerned of the political support necessary to protect human rights. Yet in its preamble, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out that human rights are “the highest aspiration of the common people”, a fundamental right recalled by the Secretary-General in his *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights*, issued on 24 February. In view of that inviolability, as France has already proposed, it is necessary to abolish the right of veto on all matters relating to human rights and humanitarian issues. In that way, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the main entity entrusted by the General Assembly with the important task of protecting and promoting human rights, could fully play its role in developing mandates and in the strategic and operational planning of peace missions.

Secondly, human rights is a cross-cutting issue that spans several areas, in particular the protection of civilians, the management of conflicts in relation to

sexual violence and violence against children, support for transitional justice and accountability mechanisms, and peacebuilding activities. In that regard, human rights teams are called on to work closely with other civilian or uniformed components of peace operations in these overlapping areas. That requires integrated planning and better coordinated activities in the field. Therefore, with a view to strengthening the performance of peacekeepers in collecting information and identifying human rights violations, the human rights component, in conjunction with the Secretariat and contributing countries, could do more to train uniformed personnel. The effective protection of civilians, and consequently human rights, can be achieved only by troops who are not only experienced but also familiar with the fundamentals of humanitarian law.

Moreover, the human rights issue is of particular importance in peace agreements signed between parties to the conflict. In that context, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and human rights teams must, at all stages of the process, support missions in implementing agreements. Their active participation in the negotiation phase of peace agreements must therefore be strengthened. That also applies to the implementation phase of mandates, where they must receive the necessary political and financial support and the genuine cooperation of the different parties to the conflict in investigating possible human rights violations and regularly submitting their reports on the human rights situation.

In addition, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic may have an impact on the humanitarian and human rights situation, particularly in conflict areas. The economic recessions that will inevitably follow could trigger social and political crises in some countries, including developing countries. Such scenarios would lead to a widespread increase in cases of human rights violations. We therefore call on the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, if this is not already being done, to develop an appropriate human rights response plan in coordination with its various partners.

Annex 43**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár**

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union (see annex 25) and would like to present some additional remarks in its national capacity.

We welcome the participation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the debate, and we express our appreciation for her briefing, as well as the briefings by Special Representative Shearer and Mr. Dismas Kitenge Senga.

Human rights are not only one of the three pillars of the United Nations work but also a fundamental pillar of all peacekeeping operations. While primarily intervening to seek a peaceful settlement in troubled areas, members of United Nations peacekeeping missions also have to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights.

In 2018, the Secretary-General announced the launch of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, underlining the clear role of human rights in peacekeeping efforts. Slovakia endorsed the Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. The focus on the human rights aspect is one of the main optics in our national implementation of that initiative, which serves as a blueprint for the United Nations peacekeeping agenda and helps to overcome the critical challenges that peacekeeping faces today.

Human rights and international humanitarian law are an integral part of the regular and predeployment training of the Slovak Armed Forces, which without a doubt helps to fulfil humanitarian and human rights tasks where those are a part of the mandate of the peacekeeping mission. As we see a rising trend in including human rights tasks in the mandates of the Security Council and substantive human rights capacities or components in missions, appropriate training becomes inevitable for all troops and should therefore be made mandatory.

The United Nations should not replace host countries in their primary responsibility to promote and protect human rights, although it has an obligation to become involved in case of absence of such conduct by the host country. The adequate training of host country authorities helps to bridge the gap and is necessary for good cooperation with the human rights capacities of peacekeeping missions. The failure of peacekeeping missions to consistently and effectively respond in cases of gross human rights violations and to anticipate the threat of atrocity crimes highlights the need to develop the capacity of peacekeeping personnel to conduct threat assessments and improve monitoring mechanisms.

The effective monitoring of violations of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law should make clear the gravity and scale of threats to particular groups of civilians and provide information on perpetrators. Monitoring should also include the analysis of historical trends and patterns in relation to targeted populations. Improved coordination between human rights officers and military and police personnel can enable missions to use different types of expertise in order to maximize their mission's impact with regard to the protection of civilians.

We are convinced that the protection and promotion of human rights should be key functions of peacekeeping operations. The human rights aspects of these operations have immense potential for enhancing conflict resolution through peaceful means.

Annex 44**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Spain to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Human rights are our *raison d'être*. They are universal and indivisible. We defend them by following the principles of integrity, impartiality and independence. I wanted to begin the Spanish statement for this debate by mentioning those guidelines, which the Secretary-General sets out in *The Highest Aspiration: A Call to Action for Human Rights* of 2020. Our country fully shares the Secretary-General's approach, which intrinsically links peace and security with the resolute and effective protection of human rights.

Human rights are at the heart of all decision-making and implementation processes at the United Nations, as well as in peace operations, which are the emblem and flagship of the Organization within the peace and security pillar.

We would like to once again reiterate Spain's support for the critical work of protecting and promoting human rights carried out by United Nations peacekeeping missions. This principle must continue to be clearly reflected in Security Council mandates, which are a key tool in achieving full compliance with the mandated tasks and the successful conduct of the operation by the Force Commander on the ground. A clear mandate requires the explicit mention of the protection of human rights.

Mandates must be supported by appropriate training prior to the deployment of troops that is adapted to the real environment in which the troops are going to operate and based on United Nations policy and good practices in this area. We must therefore continue to pool our efforts in three crucial areas: first, the Security Council, which is responsible for developing and adopting the mandate; secondly, working with troop- and police-contributing countries, which are responsible for the appropriate training and selection of the forces to be deployed; and, thirdly, the Secretariat, which develops the concept and establishes policies, which are periodically reviewed in the light of lessons learned.

Today, peace operations face a future beset with difficulties and future budgetary constraints. We must continue to strive for maximum efficiency and the rational use of available resources. In short, we must create a dynamic of ongoing improvement in the three areas that we have just mentioned: mandates, well-trained and skilled troops, and the continual review of lessons learned.

I would like to focus attention on the following two specific aspects with potentially major implications for human rights in peace operations. These are the women and peace and security dimension and the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The outcome is not predictable in either area. Our actions will be decisive in transforming the crisis into opportunities, confrontation into inclusion and divisions into solid foundations for building a more balanced international society. We must act on both fronts.

More than half of the world's population are women, who play a crucial social role in conflict settings. In many cases, women are instrumental in seeking solutions that are the basis for lasting peace. With regard to the women and peace and security agenda, I would therefore like to stress the following.

On the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of resolution 1325 (2000), significant progress has been made in terms of the inclusion of women in peace processes, particularly following the Council's adoption of resolution 2242 (2015). The participation of women in peace processes must continue to be one of the highest priorities. Numerous United Nations studies show that the prospects for successful

peace processes increase when they involve women at every stage of peacebuilding and peacekeeping. Spain plays a leading role in the training and preparation of troops prior to their deployment in operations, both in the context of the European Union, NATO and the United Nations. Spain is recognized by the European Union as a leader in gender military training discipline. Being fully aware of the importance of education and training in that area, Spain is fully prepared to explore additional forms of cooperation with the United Nations Secretariat to further strengthen this crucial aspect of peacekeeping operations.

The year 2020 has been particularly turbulent. The COVID-19 pandemic is generating major changes for peacekeeping operations. It affects the evolution of conflicts and the way in which troops operate.

At this point, I would like to express Spain's satisfaction with the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) on 1 July. It is essential that we now implement the appeal for a ceasefire announced by the Secretary-General on 23 March and ensure the subsequent humanitarian truce. Such measures are a catalyst both for the resolution of conflicts before the Security Council and for the effective protection of populations who suffer them, in particular the most vulnerable civilians. All of this is primarily linked to human rights.

The pandemic is aggravating the situation of millions of people who face shortages or a lack of food, water, electricity and health-care services, precarious livelihoods and destroyed infrastructure. Meanwhile, as conflicts intensify, and many linger, the pandemic is also aggravating the situation of refugees in a number of camps. Many are facing increasing instability, which, in turn, can lead to greater volatility and stress in the difficult daily operation of these facilities.

It is essential to focus attention on the secondary impact of the pandemic on the food security and livelihoods of those affected by armed conflict. Over time, the levels of hunger, malnutrition, disease and stress related to economic problems may increase. There could be disruptions to local and global supply chains, particularly food supplies. At the same time, markets for labour, goods and services will be weakened by the reduced supply and demand. Peacekeeping operations should work closely with the various civil society actors to monitor these situations and assist in fully implementing the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the fair distribution of humanitarian aid.

The evolution and improvement in the handling of human rights in missions that have included a human rights component indicate both the way forward and the hope that such a potential exists. Efforts regarding the human rights dimension of peace operations could benefit greatly from the leadership of the peacekeeping operation placing human rights at the centre of the overall mandate from the outset. That committed leadership is also essential to achieving the highest level of exemplary performance by the troops. The human rights component should be placed in a leading position within the operational structure, which demonstrates the importance that its leadership attaches to it, thereby reinforcing its cross-cutting nature and key role in the planning of other activities.

It is also important to review the environmental and cultural factors that strengthen peacekeeping activities in terms of human rights and the degree of commitment of local actors to mobilize the will of both local and international stakeholders. Efforts could also benefit from adequate strategic communication to support traditional advocacy measures on the ground by dedicated teams. The leadership of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which Spain greatly appreciates, is critical in that regard.

Annex 45**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the United Nations**

In an era where humankind is threatened by inter-State conflicts, intra-State frictions, asymmetrical threats posed by non-State actors, natural disasters, health-related issues and a variety of other challenges, Sri Lanka appreciates Germany's efforts to initiate discussion on the timely subject of peace operations and human rights. My delegation wishes Germany every success as President of the Security Council for the month of July and is confident that it will be a productive tenure.

Sri Lanka takes this opportunity to honour the thousands of men and women who for decades have helped countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace by providing security and peacebuilding support under the Blue Helmet. Sri Lanka is proud to have a long association with United Nations peacekeeping operations, having served as a member of the 1956 Advisory Committee that led to the establishment of the first classical peacekeeping mission — United Nations Emergency Force I, deployed during the Suez crisis. It later deployed United Nations peacekeepers to the United Nations Operation in the Congo in 1960.

With consistent effort, a wealth of experience and expertise gathered across diverse scenarios, United Nations peace operations have become a vital, credible, dependable and versatile global instrument to ensure human security in conflict situations. The significance of the current peace operations are such that, considering the magnitudes of violence and their frequency of manifestation, it would be hard to visualize the destiny of human lives in some conflict zones without the assistance of the United Nations.

Human rights remain an important element of United Nations peace operations. Several peacekeeping operations, for example, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, have integrated human rights components, as do special political missions such as the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti, to identify a few. This is crucial across a wide spectrum of missions and strengthens the missions' credibility.

Sri Lanka remains fully committed to United Nations peacekeeping and upholding human rights and, in that context, has taken many measures to ensure that all Sri Lankan peacekeepers are suitably trained and fully equipped with theoretical knowledge and for the practical application of all necessary functions of peacekeeping, including the promotion and protection of human rights. To that end, a comprehensive package of education and training on relevant subjects are included in the predeployment training courses and continuity is maintained during the deployment by way of in-mission training, conducted in consultation with the United Nations authorities.

In addition, human rights have been included as part of the training of security forces and police in Sri Lanka. At the leading degree-awarding tertiary institution established for military personnel, the Kotelawala Defence University, where many military cadets pursue degree programmes, human rights is taught as an important component of the academic programme. The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka and the International Committee of the Red Cross also conduct a

number of training programmes for the military and the police on human rights and international humanitarian law.

It is observed that peace operations are becoming progressively complex in nature, with diverse sociopolitical challenges that have an increased impact on civilians as a result of the direct and indirect actions of parties to conflicts. Sri Lanka has endorsed the Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians.

Violations of human rights in most conflict-affected communities disproportionately affect women and children. In situations of heightened violence and insecurity, as one of the most vulnerable segments of the population, they may experience such violations from within the family itself, in addition to existing discrimination in society. As such, it is vital to be sensitive to issues of gender when looking at human rights.

In a number of missions, women protection advisers are responsible for monitoring, analysing and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence. While assuring Sri Lanka's continuous commitment to enhancing the participation of women in peacekeeping operations, it is emphasized that focusing on the education and capacity-building of women should be considered a priority task to achieve meaningful gender parity as a long-term solution to this issue.

The coronavirus disease pandemic has significantly impacted the human rights situation, particularly in territories affected by conflict. Travel-related restrictions and the limitations enforced on human interactions have generated negative effects across the spectrum, ranging from difficulties in delivering humanitarian assistance to the provision of protection for vulnerable communities. The diversion of resources from funds allocated to United Nations field missions for humanitarian assistance to the pandemic mitigation effort would weaken the capacities of peacekeeping missions for protecting civilians.

It is pertinent to mention that the credibility of institutions that promote the adherence to and protection of human rights can be significantly undermined when they are unduly politicized. There have been instances where unproven allegations of human rights violations were used as instruments to unduly pressurize and manipulate contributions to peacekeeping by Governments for undue political gains. Sri Lanka firmly believes that the United Nations, as the largest global body committed to ensuring the rights of every human being, should always remain impartial, while fully respecting the principle of sovereign equality in its all interactions with Member States.

The ever-changing dynamics of current armed conflicts and their rapid evolution makes the protection of human rights of vulnerable communities a recurring task that is becoming increasingly challenging. In that context, United Nations peacekeeping operations should remain a collective endeavour in ensuring the protection of vulnerable communities, and it is essential that there be engagement and interaction with various stakeholders, including civil society and the wider population. This is also vital to building trust with local communities where United Nations peacekeeping missions operate. Protecting civilians and upholding human rights are vital to the success of United Nations peacekeeping operations, shape how a population will remember the peacekeepers and reflect the manner in which the United Nations will be evaluated.

Having engaged in a humanitarian struggle with a terrorist organization that used human shields, suicide bombers and child soldiers, Sri Lanka's armed forces and police have been sharing expertise in handling the difficult and complex terrains of the humanitarian engagement field in difficult areas of the world. While acknowledging and commending the effort by the Secretariat and the Department

of Peace Operations for their dedicated effort in promoting the human rights of communities undergoing hardships in conflict-affected territories, Sri Lanka reiterates its full commitment to this noble cause to protect and promote human rights and the protection of civilians.

Annex 46**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations, Sergiy Kyslytsya**

We commend Germany for convening this open debate to consider the issue of human rights in peacekeeping operations. We concur with the statement contained in the President's concept note that:

“As the world continues to witness armed conflicts and human rights violations, stressing the universality of human rights and including them in discussions about international peace and security is more critical than ever.”
(S/2020/604, annex, para. 2)

During the previous formal debate of the Security Council on human rights three years ago (see S/PV.7918), their interlinkages with armed conflicts were clearly asserted. It was also reaffirmed at the Arria Formula meeting held on 17 April 2019 at the initiative of Kuwait, Côte d'Ivoire and Peru.

Today's meeting therefore has a fitting subject for discussion for the Council given the state of today's world, full of numerous ongoing conflicts. It is also important to give more attention to the topic at a time when the coronavirus disease pandemic has aggravated each and every aspect of international peace and security, including in the human rights dimension.

Only several days ago, we marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the adoption of the Charter of the United Nations, which established the United Nations system based on the fundamental pillars of peace and security, human rights and development. But, in a globalized world, it is evident that sustainable peace and security cannot be achieved in isolation from human rights. Human rights violations are not only a grave consequence of conflicts but, frequently, the very reason that conflicts start in the first place.

In the past, we have seen instances when the Security Council was able to establish that link, referring to the danger of the eruption of conflicts and violations of human rights.

In the 1990s, the Security Council, after reports on human rights violations in the former Yugoslavia, established the first peacekeeping operation in United Nations history with a mandate for the protection of civilians. As of today, more than half of the current peace missions created or authorized by the Security Council have human rights tasks in their mandates and include substantive human rights capacities or components.

As an active contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, Ukraine strongly supports further development of the human rights component in United Nations peacekeeping operations. It is particularly essential for enhancing the protection of the most vulnerable in conflicts — children and women. As rightly outlined in the concept note for today's meeting, peacekeeping operations may engage in casualty reporting, capacity-building programmes and public reporting on human rights violations and abuses.

In that regard, it is highly commendable that human rights became an indispensable part of the Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. Ukraine is proud to be among the first States to endorse the Declaration and notes with satisfaction the growing number of Member States that share the values and purposes of the document.

At the same time, there are still drawbacks in the Council's work on human rights. Since the outbreak of the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, which was utterly

overlooked, the attitude in the Council to human rights as a core component of conflict prevention regrettably has not changed much. The Council still does not address human rights violations as early signs of impending tragedies.

The whole world has been observing for almost a decade the severe consequences of the crisis in Syria and the gross human rights violations committed by various parties, primarily the Syrian regime and its allies. Early warning signs of an imminent conflict were very clear already back in 2011. Immense human suffering, hundreds of thousands of dead, millions displaced and not even the hint of a light at the end of the tunnel. Action by the Security Council on the matter has been blocked by what is now 14 vetoes on the part of the newest non-elected member of the Council — the Russian Federation, which aims not only to revive Stalin's methods but also to reach the veto anti-record of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

More than six years have passed since Russia illegally occupied Crimea. The occupying Power commits massive systematic violations of human rights and seeks to destroy the identity of Ukrainians and the indigenous people of the peninsula — the Crimean Tatars — as well as other ethnic and religious groups. In its resolutions "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol (Ukraine)", the General Assembly reaffirmed that Crimean residents should enjoy protection under the Geneva Conventions and applicable human rights instruments. Numerous testimonies of the crimes committed during the Russian aggression against Ukraine can be found in reports of the United Nations human rights monitoring mission in Ukraine, which has been operating in my country at the invitation of the Ukrainian Government in an effort to prevent massive human rights violations by the occupying Power.

The failure of the Russian Federation as an occupying Power in Crimea is documented in detail in the recent report (A/HRC/44/21) of the Secretary-General entitled "Situation of human rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine", submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 74/168. The report confirms Russia's continued disregard of its obligations as occupying power under international humanitarian law, as well as the deteriorating human rights situation in occupied Crimea, including widespread abductions, enforced disappearances, torture, politically motivated persecution on ethnic and religious grounds and racial discrimination.

Let me also note the Secretary-General's reference to the Russian President's Decree No. 187 of 29 April 2019, aimed at simplifying the process of acquiring Russian citizenship for nationals of Ukraine living in Crimea or Donbas. It is yet further proof of the identical nature of Russia's aggressive strategy in Crimea and Donbas. It should be a wake-up call to those who still try to distinguish between Russia's occupation of Crimea and its actions in Donbas, which absolutely represent a continuation of the international armed conflict that Russia started on 20 February 2014. That is why we need concrete, robust actions to compel the Russian Federation to uphold its obligations under international humanitarian law and human rights law in both Crimea and Donbas.

Ukraine has consistently promoted the role of prevention in ensuring and protecting human rights, both as a member of the Security Council in 2016-2017 and as a current member of the Human Rights Council. We have always stressed the need to strengthen the innate connection between the protection of human rights and the maintenance of peace and security. The crucial implications of human rights violations for peace and security should be recognized, and it would be only natural for the Security Council to take the lead on this matter.

I would like to underline that holding discussions in the Council on the human rights dimension of peace and security so infrequently and sporadically and without a dedicated agenda item does little to boost the Council's ability to fully implement its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations. A piecemeal approach to an issue of such fundamental importance for maintaining peace and security can no longer be applied. It is high time to take a fresh look at the role and place of human rights in the work of the Council.

The proper consideration of human rights violations in the context of the maintenance of peace and security could contribute considerably to preventing the outbreak of armed conflict. If a conflict is already raging, addressing its human rights dimension may prevent further escalation of violence and serve as a deterrent to conflict-related atrocities. That is why the human rights component should be an integral part of the Council's activity in the area of conflict resolution and management. The Council has no right to repeat its failures in Rwanda, to continue to fail in Syria or to remain impotent on Russian aggression against Ukraine.

The time has come to restore the integrity of the entire United Nations system and to bridge the gap between New York and Geneva as regards the human rights dimension of international peace and security.

Annex 47**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Uruguay to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Uruguay expresses its gratitude to the Federal Republic of Germany, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for convening this timely high-level open debate via video-teleconference on “United Nations peacekeeping operations: Peace operations and human rights”, as it is an issue of critical importance for the Organization, particularly in these challenging times of global crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

In that connection, Uruguay welcomes the unanimous adoption by the Council, on 1 July, of resolution 2532 (2020), backing the Secretary-General’s call for a worldwide ceasefire to combat the COVID-19 pandemic — an initiative that Uruguay endorsed in a timely manner.

In addition, while expressing its appreciation for the valuable statements delivered by the Federal Minister of Defence of Germany, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for South Sudan and the representative of civil society, Uruguay would like to contribute to the debate with the following statement.

Human rights are intrinsically linked to peace and security. Moreover, human rights violations can be both a cause and a consequence of conflicts. It is crucial to emphasize the importance of all States and other relevant actors respecting and observing their obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and other international law, including international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law. It should be recalled that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians, as well as for the protection and promotion of human rights, rests with each State, and that the role of peace operations is to cooperate with national authorities in support of their efforts.

The appreciation of the relevance of human rights to peacekeeping developed gradually. From the establishment of the first human rights component in 1991 — under the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador — until today, we can affirm that human rights now constitute a core function of peace operations. Indeed, over half of the peace operations currently under way perform tasks related to human rights. Those tasks include, among many others, promoting and protecting human rights through monitoring and investigation; analysis and reporting; capacity-building for State institutions, including national human rights institutions and civil society; early warnings; protection of civilians; and support to Governments in combating impunity. Ultimately, the human rights-related tasks that peace operations can perform can contribute to the broader efforts of the United Nations and the international community to support political processes, build sustainable peace and prevent, deter and mitigate human rights violations.

Another clear illustration of the relevance of human rights in peace operations is the quantity of United Nations documents, both those resulting from intergovernmental processes and those by the Secretariat, which cover the issue substantially. The Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments, the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Peace Operations policy on the protection of civilians are just a few of the most recent examples.

Uruguay believes that there is still plenty of scope for peace operations to contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights more effectively and,

in that regard, will share some of the areas in which, in its view, improvements can be made.

The Security Council has a key role to play as it is the organ that bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security through the appropriate use of all the tools at its disposal, including peace operations. It is necessary to have realistic and achievable mandates, where the human rights-related tasks are clearly articulated and their scope is understood equally by Security Council members, a mission's leadership, peace personnel in the field and the national authorities of the host country.

The training of peacekeepers in human rights, based on clear standards defined by the United Nations, is another key aspect to be considered if the impact of peace operations in the promotion and protection of human rights is to be increased, as is achieving greater participation, both quantitative and qualitative, of women in peace operations.

Moreover, nothing of this can be sustained if peace operations do not have the necessary human and financial resources and equipment to implement their mandated tasks, including those related to human rights. In the context of the Organization's financial crisis, human rights tasks must not be among the first victims of budget cuts.

As a third and last point, Uruguay would like to share its experience as a troop-contributing country whose peacekeeping personnel has a long-standing history of implementing mandates on the protection of civilians and human rights through some examples that could be considered as good practices, as well as some challenges that have to be faced on a daily basis.

The importance Uruguay attaches to respect for, and the promotion of, human rights, both at the national and international levels, is reflected in the performance of its peacekeeping personnel in the various missions they are deployed in, which, in many cases, include specific mandates on the protection of civilians and human rights.

Uruguay's National Peacekeeping Training Centre (ENOPU) is the national institution responsible for providing the necessary predeployment training to peacekeepers on a wide range of topics, of which human rights are one of the pillars. In addition, ENOPU works closely with the United Nations to provide international courses to other troop- and police-contributing countries. A recent example is the training-of-trainers course on the protection of civilians that was held in Montevideo, with the support of the Department of Peace Operations. Furthermore, in support of Department of Peace Operations training efforts, Uruguay, with support from the United States, translated into Spanish core training materials, including on the protection of civilians, that are now available to all Member States.

Uruguay believes that the tasks related to the protection of civilians and human rights are interlinked. We are always seeking to increase our capacity to protect those communities most affected by conflict. For a large portion of last year, Uruguay worked together with UNICEF to develop a national policy on child protection for peacekeepers that is now in force and has given Uruguayan peacekeepers extra tools for more effective child protection. Uruguay has also increased its contribution of female personnel to peace operations and continues to work on this issue through various platforms, such as the Elsie Initiative Fund.

In addition, Uruguay has continuously contributed peacekeepers to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) since its inception, 20 years ago, when it was still called MONUC, and continues to contribute with the same engagement and desire for stability and

lasting peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Throughout all those years, Uruguayan peacekeepers have gained vast experience in carrying out tasks related to the protection of civilians and human rights, which in turn has led to the training of new troops in order to continue to do what has been done well and to improve in those areas where things could have been done better.

Another salient point of Uruguay's experience in MONUSCO is the relevance of the integration and teamwork among the military, civilian and police component and the collaboration with other relevant agents in the field, such as humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society. A concrete example worth highlighting is the excellent relationship of the Uruguayan contingent with the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which has led to tangible results in terms of mandate implementation, particularly in the areas of the protection of civilians and respect for, and the promotion of, human rights.

Similarly, another crucial element of implementing protection-related tasks more effectively is the information gathering and analysis capacity of peace operations. In the case of the Uruguayan contingent in MONUSCO, the use of intelligence tools in North Kivu has proven beneficial to prevent human rights violations because, among other things, it allows for better situational awareness and early-warning mechanisms.

Uruguay's experience in peace operations has also enabled it to identify some challenges that can negatively affect a mission's capacity to conduct human rights tasks; some of those challenges include the following.

Cases of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations peacekeepers, which Uruguay strongly condemns, constitute a violation of the most basic rights of victims and are the opposite of what is expected of a Blue Helmet.

The cuts to the budgets of peace operations have, in many cases, hindered the ability of missions to implement protection-related tasks, including those related to human rights. Likewise, delays in reimbursements to troop-contributing countries have a similar negative impact.

Lastly, the current global crisis due to COVID-19 poses an additional challenge, as it exacerbates the extreme vulnerability of millions of persons who are already suffering the consequences of conflict. It also poses challenges to United Nations peace operations, which must continue to implement their mandates but with additional limitations and restrictions.

In conclusion, as a country with a long-standing commitment to multilateralism and to respect for, and the promotion of, international law, as well as with a long record of contributing peacekeepers to the United Nations, Uruguay has taken on with dedication and pride the task of protecting civilians in different parts of the world. We assure the Organization and its Member States of our intention to continue, and even increase, our contribution of Blue Helmets, particularly in these extremely challenging operational circumstances where civilians may be more vulnerable.

Similarly, at the political level at the United Nations, Uruguay will continue its hard work through every relevant platform — the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, the Fifth Committee, the Action for Peacekeeping initiative — to encourage and strengthen the contribution of peace operations to the promotion and protection of human rights.