



Security Council

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Letter dated 6 December 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Tunisia in January 2021 (see annex).

The document was prepared by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations, following consultations with other members of the Security Council.

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

(Signed) Tarek **Ladeb**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations



Annex to the letter dated 6 December 2021 from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

Assessment of the work of the Security Council during the presidency of Tunisia

I. Introduction

Under the presidency of Tunisia in January 2021, the Security Council, being unable to gather physically owing to restrictions caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, held a total of 25 videoconference meetings, of which 14 were open and 11 closed. In addition, two Arria-formula meetings and one informal interactive dialogue were held.

The Security Council adopted one resolution and agreed on two presidential statements, seven press statements and two press elements.

The signature events of the presidency of Tunisia were as follows:

- An open videoconference debate on the challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts
- An open videoconference debate on international cooperation in combating terrorism, 20 years after the adoption of Security Council resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#)
- A videoconference briefing on the cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States
- A videoconference briefing on the follow-up on the implementation of Council resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#)

II. Africa

1. West Africa and the Sahel

On 11 January 2021, the Security Council received a videoconference briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas, on the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), issued under the symbol [S/2020/1293](#).

The members of the Security Council reiterated their full support for the mandate of UNOWAS and the efforts of the Special Representative and stressed the need for continued international, regional and subregional cooperation. They welcomed the positive developments in the region on the political front, including the conduct of elections in Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia and the Niger while deploring election-related violence in other contexts.

Security Council members expressed concern over the deteriorating security situation in the region, the spread of terrorism and organized crime, and the growing intercommunal violence. They called for accelerated cooperation in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism across the region.

They recalled the multiple challenges triggered by the pandemic and called for strengthened support to the countries of the region. Several Security Council members also expressed concern over the adverse effects of climate change on the region and called for enhanced action to respond to climate-induced security threats.

In addition, Member States stressed the need to address comprehensively the security, political and development challenges and the underlying root causes of instability and conflicts in the Sahel region.

2. Mali

On 13 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference briefing followed by videoconference consultations on Mali and was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), Annadif Mahamat Saleh.

Updating Security Council members on the political transition in Mali following the coup d'état of 18 August 2020, the Special Representative stressed that, despite delays in the establishment of the National Transition Council, the newly revised transitional road map provided reasons for cautious hope, and he acknowledged that the transition period represented a real opportunity for Mali to break free from the vicious circle of political crises followed by coups d'état while underlining that success relied on the implementation of critical reforms and the holding of credible elections.

Security Council members welcomed the agreement on the revised transitional road map and commended the support provided by MINUSMA, the Economic Community of West African States, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and other regional entities to help the transitional authorities of Mali to restore stability. They underlined the need for the global community to remain engaged in the political process in Mali, recognizing that the implementation of the Algiers Agreement remained the foundation for resolving the conflict in Mali.

Members of the Security Council expressed particular concern about the recurrence of deadly attacks in the border regions of Mali and the worrisome increase in the use of improvised explosive devices on main supply routes. Some Council members urged the establishment of a United Nations support office devoted to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, to be funded through voluntary contributions, while others stressed the need to strengthen safety and security measures for the protection of peacekeepers and to continue efforts aimed at addressing the root causes of violence and instability, including through sustainable development, good and inclusive governance, accountability, the rule of law and the protection of human rights.

3. Central African Republic

On 13 January 2021, and following the attack perpetrated against the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the Security Council discussed the situation in the Central African Republic under "Other matters". Council members condemned all attacks, provocations and incitement to violence against MINUSCA. They reiterated their full support for the Mission and underlined the need to provide it with the necessary capacities to fulfil its mandate and to ensure the safety and security of the United Nations peacekeepers.

Following this meeting, members of the Security Council agreed on press elements.

On 21 January, the Security Council held a videoconference briefing followed by closed videoconference consultations on the Central African Republic. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the country, Sylvie Baipo-Temon, participated under rule 37 and made a statement.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA, Mankeur Ndiaye, briefed the Security Council on the acts of violence perpetrated before and after the presidential and legislative elections held on 27 December 2020. He noted that a coalition of armed groups (called the Coalition of Patriots for Change) and political allies, including the former President, François Bozizé, were violently challenging the outcome of the elections, even though it had been validated by the Constitutional Court. The Special Representative underlined that attacks on civilians and human rights violations were testing the capacities of MINUSCA and called for a substantial increase in the numbers of troops and police officers in the framework of inter-mission cooperation. He also urged the international community to support the country's efforts towards reconciliation, reconstruction and dialogue.

Members of the Security Council condemned all acts of violence committed by the Coalition of Patriots for Change and called upon armed groups to abide by the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of 2019. They took note of the Constitutional Court's decision confirming the election results and urged all political actors to respect that decision and to reaffirm their commitment to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law. Council members reiterated their support for MINUSCA, in particular through the provision of the necessary resources, troops and logistical assistance.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs updated the Security Council on the current situation in the country. She called upon all signatories of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation to recommit to its implementation. She requested the lifting of the arms embargo that had been imposed on the country since 2013, arguing that it was undermining the operations of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic.

On January 22, the Security Council issued a press statement in which it strongly condemned the attacks against MINUSCA and the violations of the peace agreement and called upon all stakeholders to respect the decision of the Constitutional Court in which the final results of the presidential election had been proclaimed and to reaffirm the commitment of all stakeholders to the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law in the Central African Republic.

4. Sudan (Darfur)

On 21 January 2021, the Security Council discussed the situation in the Sudan (Darfur) under "Other matters" and received a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa, Bintou Keita, on recent violence in El Geneina and western Darfur.

Members of the Security Council condemned the recent intercommunal violence and called upon the Government of the Sudan to ensure the protection of civilians, in accordance with the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians.

They also encouraged the Government to work closely with the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) to ensure support for the Government's efforts to establish peace and security, and progress peacebuilding and development in Darfur.

5. Libya

On 28 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference briefing followed by closed videoconference consultations on the situation in Libya. In her presentation, the acting Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), Stephanie Williams, underscored that the intra-Libyan dialogues, facilitated by the Mission

through the complementary political, military and economic tracks, had produced tangible progress, as the concerned parties had agreed on a ceasefire, a road map setting a clear date for national elections, and a number of economic and financial reforms.

She also reported that the ceasefire signed in Geneva on 23 October 2020 continued to be observed and that the 5+5 Joint Military Commission remained active, including on the proposed Libyan-owned ceasefire monitoring mechanism. She echoed the appeal by the Secretary-General to all regional and international actors to respect the provisions of the ceasefire agreement.

The members of the Security Council welcomed the appointment of Ján Kubiš as the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Libya and Head of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the appointment of Raisedon Zenenga as Mission Coordinator of UNSMIL, and expressed gratitude to the acting Special Representative for her valuable contribution to advancing the settlement of the crisis.

The members of the Security Council took note of the progress made by the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum, including the adoption of the Tunis road map to elections on 24 December 2021.

They called upon all Libyan and international actors to respect the ceasefire agreement in full, including the provisions on the withdrawal of all foreign forces and mercenaries from Libya, and underlined the importance of a credible and effective Libyan-led ceasefire monitoring mechanism. They also called for the full respect of the arms embargo as set out in relevant Security Council resolutions. The members of the Council recognized the important role of neighbouring countries and regional organizations in support of United Nations efforts. They further reaffirmed their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Libya. Press elements along those lines were adopted.

III. Asia

1. The situation in the Middle East (Syrian Arab Republic)

Chemical weapons (open videoconference)

On 5 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference meeting to review and discuss the implementation of Council resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, briefed the Security Council on the latest developments on the basis of the eighty-seventh monthly report of the Director-General of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

Several Security Council members underlined the need for further cooperation between the Syrian authorities and OPCW to resolve outstanding issues.

Political and humanitarian developments (open videoconference)

On 20 January, the Council held a videoconference meeting on the political and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. The Council was briefed by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Geir Pedersen, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Mark Lowcock.

While taking stock of the implementation of Security Council resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#) and the fragile security, humanitarian and socioeconomic situation in the

context of a decade of conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Pedersen informed the Council of his efforts in preparation of the fifth round of the Syrian-led, Syrian-owned, United Nations-facilitated Constitutional Committee, which was scheduled to take place from 25 to 29 January 2021 in Geneva to discuss basic principles of the constitution.

He expressed the belief that the Committee should begin to move from preparing to drafting a constitutional reform, with the Co-Chairs reaching agreement on a workplan for future meetings with clear agendas and topics.

In his briefing, Mr. Lowcock highlighted the aggravated economic hardships experienced by Syrians along with the impact of the worsening pandemic and reviewed United Nations cross-line and cross-border humanitarian operations. He stressed the importance of adequate funding and improved access and of putting an end to the violence to deliver aid to those most in need. He also underlined the focus of the United Nations response to the humanitarian crisis on life-saving needs and repairs to critical infrastructure.

2. The situation in the Middle East (Yemen)

On 14 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference briefing followed by videoconference consultations on Yemen, and received updates from the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Martin Griffiths, and Mr. Lowcock on the political, security and humanitarian situation.

The Security Council was also briefed by the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP), David Beasley. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates of Yemen, Ahmed Awad Ahmed Binmubarak, also participated under rule 37.

Recalling the attack targeting the members of the newly formed Cabinet of the Government of Yemen upon their arrival at Aden International Airport on 30 December 2020, the Special Envoy indicated that the path to peace in Yemen was a great deal more difficult than it had been one month before and that the way out needed to be focused on an inclusive political process that ended the conflict, noting that, while the two parties had agreed in principle to a nationwide ceasefire, differences persisted on issues such as the reopening of Hudaydah harbour for imports and Sana'a airport for international flights.

Mr. Lowcock underlined that Yemen was expecting a large-scale famine, with 50,000 people already starving and 16 million people predicted to go hungry in 2021, and expressed concern over the humanitarian impact of the decision of the United States of America to designate Ansar Allah as a foreign terrorist organization. He stressed that the \$1.7 billion United Nations response plan for funding aid operations in 2020 was about half of what was needed and urged donors to be generous in their pledges in 2021.

The Executive Director of WFP confirmed that famine was looming in Yemen, with 5 million people at an emergency level of food insecurity, and called upon the Security Council and leaders around the world to put pressure on actors on the ground to end the conflict and ensure that the required funding needs for assistance were met.

Security Council members welcomed the formation of a new Cabinet, condemned the attack on Aden International Airport and appealed to donor countries to honour their commitments, recognizing that the humanitarian situation would worsen if the necessary funding were not acquired. Council members also emphasized the need for a ceasefire and a political solution. Concern was also expressed over the continued bureaucratic impediments to humanitarian aid and over the attack on the aid agency compound in Aden. Members maintained a spotlight on placing a team of United Nations experts aboard the floating storage and offloading unit *Safer* that

threatens to spill 1.1 billion barrels of oil into the Red Sea and trigger a major environmental catastrophe.

3. The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

On 26 January 2021, the Security Council held the quarterly open debate on the theme “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question” by videoconference. The Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, addressed the Council for the first time in that capacity. The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, also briefed the Council. The meeting was chaired by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Mohamed Ali Nafti, with the participation of many delegations at the ministerial level.

The Special Coordinator informed the Security Council about the recent developments in the Palestinian Occupied Territory, including the efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19, Israeli settlement activities, incidents that had occurred throughout the reporting period, attacks against civilians, the humanitarian situation and political developments. Mr. Wennesland reiterated that settlements were illegal under international law and undermined the prospect of achieving a two-State solution.

He assured the Security Council that he would support and encourage Israelis and Palestinians in the pursuit of peace and urge them to refrain from any damaging unilateral steps. He looked forward to engaging with his counterparts in the Middle East Quartet to identify concrete steps for bringing the parties back to meaningful negotiations.

The Secretary-General of the League of Arab States called for concerted efforts to reaffirm the two-State solution and resolve the conflict in a comprehensive way on the basis of the internationally recognized parameters.

The members of the Security Council expressed concern over the lack of progress in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They also voiced concern about the situation on the ground and encouraged confidence-building measures. Several members recalled Council resolution [2334 \(2016\)](#) and reiterated their demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, stressing the illegality of the annexation of any part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Many Security Council members stressed the urgent need for the intensification and acceleration of efforts to launch credible negotiations aimed at ending the occupation and achieving without delay a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East, based on a two-State solution, in accordance with international law, relevant United Nations resolutions and the internationally recognized terms of reference. They highlighted the need for coordinated action by the Security Council, the Middle East Quartet, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and regional partners.

Many Security Council members welcomed the Palestinian presidential decree setting the dates for the general elections. They also stressed the need for increased attention to the humanitarian situation in the region, including in Gaza, reaffirmed the vital role played by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East and expressed particular concern over the impact of the pandemic. The members called for the full respect by all parties of international human rights law and international humanitarian law.

4. United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia

On 27 January 2021, the Security Council held a closed videoconference consultation on the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

The Security Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Asia and Head of the Centre, Natalia Gherman, who provided an update on the response of the region to the pandemic, the recent developments in the countries of the region, and the activities of the Centre in support of the Joint Plan of Action for the Implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy in Central Asia, the fight against drug trafficking and organized crime, the promotion of transboundary water cooperation, and women and youth participation.

The Special Representative stressed that the cooperation between the countries of the region, including Afghanistan, continued to develop positively despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

The Security Council members reiterated their support for the work of the Centre.

IV. Europe

1. Cyprus

On 14 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference meeting with the countries contributing troops to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP). The participants heard a briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Cyprus and Head of Mission of UNFICYP, Elizabeth Spehar. Representatives of troop- and police-contributing countries and Council members expressed support for UNFICYP.

In consultations held on 19 January, the Security Council heard a briefing by Ms. Spehar on the reports of the Secretary-General on his mission of good offices in Cyprus ([S/2021/5](#)) and on the United Nations operation in Cyprus ([S/2021/4](#)).

Members of the Security Council expressed support for the decision of the Secretary General to convene an informal five-plus-United Nations meeting between the leaders of the two Cypriot communities and the guarantor Powers at the earliest opportunity, and urged the participants to approach the talks in a spirit of flexibility and compromise and to show the necessary political will and commitment in order to achieve a lasting, comprehensive and just settlement based on bicomunal and bizonal federation as set out in relevant Council resolutions.

Security Council members urged effective coordination to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and called upon the leaders of the two Cypriot communities to engage with the technical committees more actively to ensure effective coordination and cooperation on health matters.

The Council members also expressed concern regarding the closure of the crossing points along the Green Line and the continued violations of the military status quo along the ceasefire lines and called once more upon the sides and all parties involved to respect the mandated authority of UNFICYP and to take all appropriate measures to ensure the safety and security of UNFICYP personnel.

Members of the Security Council expressed support for the work of UNFICYP and the extension of its mandate.

On 29 January, the Security Council unanimously adopted its resolution [2561 \(2021\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of UNFICYP until 31 July 2021.

V. Americas

1. Colombia

On 21 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference briefing followed by consultations to discuss the situation in Colombia. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Colombia, Claudia Blum, attended the open segment of the meeting.

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, Carlos Ruiz Massieu Aguirre, briefed the Security Council on the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia contained in document [S/2020/1301](#). He underlined that the Final Agreement for Ending the Conflict and Building a Stable and Lasting Peace of 2016 between the Government of Colombia and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo remained a unique chance for Colombia to reach peace, security, justice and reconciliation.

The Special Representative outlined five priorities for promoting the implementation of the peace agreement in 2021: (a) ensuring protection and security for former combatants, conflict-affected communities and social leaders; (b) ensuring the sustainability of the reintegration process; (c) consolidating the integrated presence of the State in conflict-affected areas; (d) reinforcing constructive dialogue between the parties; and (e) strengthening the conditions for reconciliation.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs highlighted the Government's unwavering commitment to peace in Colombia by strengthening the rule of law and developing territories marked by poverty and vulnerability.

The members of the Security Council reiterated their full and unanimous support for the peace process in Colombia and for the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia. They welcomed the letter from the President of Colombia requesting the expansion of the mandate of the Mission to include the monitoring of compliance with sentences of the Special Jurisdiction for Peace.

VI. Thematic and other issues

1. The challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts

On 6 January 2021, the Security Council held an open videoconference debate under the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security" to discuss the challenges of maintaining peace and security in fragile contexts. The President of Tunisia, Kaïs Saïed, chaired the meeting. The Council was briefed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, the Chair of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki Mahamat, and the former President of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

The Secretary-General highlighted that addressing the links between fragility and conflict was an essential component of maintaining international peace and security. He argued that drivers of fragility and conflict put many countries in a vicious cycle in which conflict bred poverty and poverty bred fragility, decreasing resilience to conflict and the prospects of peace.

He warned that the pandemic and climate change had further exacerbated those trends in such contexts. The Secretary-General further pointed out that a more ambitious approach was needed to break the cycle of poverty and conflict, and argued that such an approach should be based on the principles of “interdependence” and “inclusion” as well as women’s participation and the pledge to “leave no one behind”, as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals. He concluded that the Security Council had a critical role to play in addressing the links between fragility and conflict, mainly by acting early and preventively, engaging strategically to address the root causes of conflict and speaking with one voice.

The Chair of the African Union Commission indicated that State fragility and the related challenges for peace and security were most acute on the African continent and that overcoming such challenges was a top priority for the African Union.

He explained that the African Union had adopted related policies and guidelines to prevent conflict and tension and was engaging in active efforts across the continent to rebuild peace and foster diplomacy based on the principle of finding African solutions to African problems. While commending the support of the United Nations to those efforts, he underlined that access to predictable resources and other related challenges were hindering response efforts.

Mr. Mahamat argued that exclusion was a key driver of crises and tensions and that the only strategy for addressing fragility was to resolutely succeed in the policies to empower women and boldly integrate young people into a genuinely inclusive synergy of those vital forces in societies.

Mrs. Johnson Sirleaf emphasized that the Security Council had the power to help end the cycle of conflict, poverty and despair that so many continued to face, and she called for more attention to be paid to the festering root causes of conflict before they erupted, stressing that prevention was always better than cure. In that regard, she voiced support for local governance responses and for the training of more local women leaders, who could help to contain tensions before they escalated.

In the ensuing debate, Heads of State, Ministers, senior officials and many representatives of Security Council members recognized that fragility and conflicts were mutually reinforcing and emphasized the need for the Council to work more closely with the other main United Nations organs to foster a comprehensive, coordinated whole-of-system approach to addressing the root causes of fragility and insecurity, using inclusive solutions to boost community resilience and strengthen State institutions while respecting national ownership and regional initiatives. In that regard, many Council members underlined that addressing the underlying drivers of fragility was crucial for preventing conflicts and breaking the endless cycles of crises.

2. Countering terrorism

On 12 January 2021, under the agenda item entitled “Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts”, the Security Council held a virtual ministerial open debate on the theme “The twentieth anniversary of Security Council resolution [1373 \(2001\)](#) and the establishment of the Counter-Terrorism Committee: achievements in international cooperation, challenges and opportunities”.

The Security Council was briefed by the Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, the Assistant Secretary-General and Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Director, Michèle Coninsx, and the Executive Director of Neem Foundation, Fatima Akilu.

In his briefing, Mr. Voronkov underlined that the Security Council had provided significant guidance to Member States during the past two decades in their efforts to counter terrorism. He emphasized the need to remain extremely vigilant in the face

of the persistent terrorist threat. Ms. Coninx called for a comprehensive and coordinated United Nations approach aimed at assisting States to develop and implement effective counter-terrorism measures while addressing conditions conducive to terrorism and violent extremism.

Ms. Akilu outlined the importance of a whole-of-government approach and the role of civil society in supporting the counter-terrorism efforts of States.

In the ensuing debate, Security Council members condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and shared their assessments of the terrorist threat, as well as a number of best practices and remaining challenges. They also reaffirmed their commitment to continuing to combat terrorism, including through national, regional and international initiatives and policies.

In a presidential statement ([S/PRST/2021/1](#)) adopted at the beginning of the meeting, the members of the Security Council welcomed the role of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, with the assistance of its Executive Directorate, in the monitoring, promotion and facilitation of the implementation of relevant Council resolutions and resolved to further strengthen the unified and coordinated international response to terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, in accordance with the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

3. Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security (League of Arab States)

On 18 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference briefing, chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of Tunisia, Othman Jerandi, in connection with the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security", on the theme "Cooperation between the Security Council and the League of Arab States". The Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary DiCarlo, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Ahmed Aboul Gheit, briefed the Council on this occasion. Under rule 37, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, Anwar Gargash, delivered a statement, on behalf of the Arab Group.

In their statements, the members of the Security Council recognized the contribution of the League of Arab States and its member States to collective endeavours aimed at resolving conflicts in the Arab region peacefully. They encouraged efforts to promote closer cooperation between the United Nations and the League of Arab States in the fields of conflict early warning, prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding, sustaining peace, and counter-terrorism. In that regard, several Council members emphasized the importance of intensifying the coordination between the League and the Special Envoys and Representatives of the United Nations, including through arranging periodic meetings, whenever possible, with a view to reaching a more comprehensive understanding of the crisis in the region and helping to develop effective solutions.

In a presidential statement ([S/PRST/2021/2](#)) adopted on 29 January 2021, the members of the Security Council welcomed the strong cooperation between the two organizations and encouraged the holding of an annual informal meeting between its members and the members of the Council of the League of Arab States and, whenever possible, an informal meeting between its members and representatives of the Arab Summit Troika and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, on the margins of the high-level segment of the General Assembly.

4. Follow-up on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2532 (2020)

On 25 January 2021, the Security Council held a videoconference briefing under the item entitled “Maintenance of international peace and security” to review the implementation of Council resolution 2532 (2020). The meeting was chaired by Mr. Jerandi. The Council was briefed by Ms. DiCarlo; the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Jean-Pierre Lacroix; Mr. Lowcock; and the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, Atul Khare.

Ms. DiCarlo explained that, despite the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire, which had initially brought new momentum, the pandemic had exacerbated flashpoints for tension and increased risks of instability. She warned that, as the impact of the pandemic grew, so too would the associated risks, magnified by inequalities in the global recovery, especially regarding the access to vaccines.

She reiterated that the collective and individual engagement of Security Council members would remain crucial, adding that “recovering better” in the wake of the pandemic would require more political and financial investment in conflict prevention.

Mr. Lacroix underscored the continued impact of the pandemic on the already complex political situations, explaining that it had further delayed the implementation of peace processes in some cases while leading to the crystallization of tensions among stakeholders in others. He also stressed that the pandemic had exacerbated existing gender inequalities and highlighted the fact that women were disproportionately affected by its impact.

Mr. Lacroix underlined that United Nations peacekeeping missions continued to deliver on their mandated tasks, demonstrating adaptability, resilience and innovation while placing emphasis on ensuring the safety and health of their military, police, and civilian personnel. He stressed that peacekeeping operations were working to anticipate changing risks through long-term horizon-scanning, with a view to better preparing for such risks, while drawing lessons to foster good practices.

Mr. Lowcock reiterated his warning that the pandemic would hit the world’s most vulnerable and conflict-affected countries hardest. He underlined that the pandemic was hampering the ability to resolve and end conflicts and, in turn, had major humanitarian consequences, as most of the people who needed assistance lived in situations of armed conflict.

He underscored that Governments needed to fulfil their responsibility to include in their national vaccination plans all high-risk populations within their territories, including refugees, internally displaced people and people living in areas under the control of non-State armed groups. Mr. Lowcock also pointed out the risk resulting from the fact that the most vulnerable countries were at the end of a long, slow-moving queue for the COVID-19 vaccines.

Commenting on the secondary consequences of the pandemic, he warned that many countries might lose a decade or more of per capita income growth, and he expected extreme poverty to be on the rise for the first time in 20 years.

Mr. Khare provided an overview of the proactive measures taken by the Department of Operational Support to ensure the safety of field missions, protect its personnel and mitigate the spread of COVID-19. He explained that the rotation policy had allowed for the quick detection of cases and the ability to isolate and replace personnel without delay, and he underscored cooperation with other partners, including the African Union and the European Union, to prevent and mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in various operational contexts.

He indicated that the Department continued its efforts to coordinate a system-wide COVID-19 vaccination programme for all United Nations personnel and dependents worldwide.

In the ensuing discussion, members of the Security Council reiterated once again the importance of its resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#) and stressed the need to engage collectively to speed up its implementation. They underlined that the cessation of hostilities was an indispensable condition for effectively fighting the pandemic and reiterated their support for the appeal of the Secretary-General for a global ceasefire.

Security Council members commended peacekeepers and recognized their remarkable efforts to implement their mandates in situations of armed conflict despite the extremely difficult conditions related to the pandemic.

Members of the Security Council also emphasized the need to ensure a fair and equitable distribution of affordable COVID-19 vaccines, in particular in conflict hotspots, arguing that no one would be safe until everyone was safe and warning that, as long as the pandemic continued, the risk of conflict and tension and the threat to international peace and security would only grow.
