

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 5 May 2021 from the Permanent Representative of  
China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

In its capacity as President of the Security Council for the month of May, China intends to organize an open debate on the theme “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers” on 24 May.

In order to guide the discussions on this topic, China has prepared a concept note (see annex).

Member States and observers wishing to participate are invited to submit a written statement of approximately 500 words through the eSpeakers module on the e-deleGATE+ platform (see enclosure).

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

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**  
Permanent Representative and  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the People's Republic of China to the United Nations



**Annex to the letter dated 5 May 2021 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

[Original: Chinese]

**Concept note for the Security Council open debate on the theme “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers”**

**I. Background**

1. China, in its capacity as the President of the Security Council for the month of May, proposes to convene a Security Council open debate on “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers”, to be held on 24 May 2021.

2. United Nations peacekeeping operations were launched in response to the needs of the times and have evolved in the light of their developments. For more than 70 years, United Nations peacekeeping operations, as an effective means for maintaining international peace and security, have played an important role in the political settlement of hotspot issues. Over the past two decades, the scope and intensity of conflicts have changed dramatically, peacekeeping operations have faced increasing challenges, and traditional and non-traditional security factors have posed serious threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers. Since 2013, more than 260 peacekeepers have died as a result of malicious attacks, and there have been a considerable number of casualties owing to factors such as illness, traffic accidents and other causes. The unprecedented coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has not only affected the implementation of peacekeeping mandates, but also posed serious challenges to the safety and security of peacekeepers. Recently, terrorism, malicious attacks and armed conflicts have cost the lives of a number of peacekeepers in Mali, the Central African Republic and other mission areas.

3. Peacekeeping operations are ultimately carried out by peacekeepers. Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers is not only an important guarantee for enhancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations but is also a necessity for improving peacekeeping performance. Enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers involves multiple factors, including deployment standards, equipment level, training, medical conditions, the use of new technologies, and the relation between missions and host countries, and is a prominent issue facing peacekeeping operations today.

4. The international community has taken considerable steps and efforts to review and improve the security of peacekeepers. The security of peacekeepers is one of the priorities of the Secretary-General’s Action for Peacekeeping initiative and has been further addressed in the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. With the support of the United Nations peace and development trust fund, Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz was entrusted to lead a study on the issue, and the report entitled “Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers: we need to change the way we are doing business” was released in December 2017, containing proposals for specific and targeted measures. The Secretary-General issued an action plan in January 2018, which has since been revised to provide a concrete, multidimensional approach to improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. From 2019 to 2021, the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly consistently included the safety and security of peacekeepers as

one of the subjects of its reports and has put forward a number of recommendations in this regard. On 30 March 2020, the Security Council unanimously adopted its first resolution on the safety and security of peacekeepers (resolution [2518 \(2020\)](#)), which covers multiple aspects, such as training, medical care, technology and partnerships, and provides policy guidance for enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers in a comprehensive manner. The Department of Peace Operations, the Department of Operational Support, the Department of Safety and Security and other relevant departments of the Secretariat have been working together under a multipronged approach to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers.

5. The safety and security of peacekeepers is a shared responsibility of the international community, especially the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries, finance-contributing countries and host countries. The Security Council should establish clear and feasible mandates based on actual situations. The Secretariat should strengthen internal coordination, provide operational and logistical support, and enhance a mission's early warning and emergency response capabilities. Troop- and police-contributing countries should ensure that their personnel are well trained. Finance-contributing countries should provide adequate resources for peacekeepers to perform their duties. Host countries should improve public understanding and support for peacekeeping operations and bring to justice the perpetrators of attacks on peacekeepers. Continued efforts should be made to translate commitments and consensus into concrete actions.

## II. Objective

6. The debate is intended to provide a platform for dialogue on the issue of the safety and security of peacekeepers, to mobilize greater efforts by the international community towards finding appropriate solutions to address the major security risks and challenges faced by peacekeepers and to help improve peacekeeping operations.

## III. Focus of discussion

7. The discussion may focus on the following questions:

(a) Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers requires long-term investment and efforts. It is important to take stock of the efforts made by the international community to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers and to explore what room there is for further improvement. What are the salient safety and security risks at present? How should they be effectively addressed?

(b) Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers is a shared responsibility that requires the coordinated actions of all parties. How can the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries, finance-contributing countries and other stakeholders strengthen coordination? The issue of the safety and security of peacekeepers covers a wide range of areas, involving many departments of the Secretariat. How should coordination within the Secretariat and with other stakeholders continue to be strengthened?

(c) Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers requires strong policy support and guidance. Security Council resolution [2518 \(2020\)](#) provides for an integrated approach to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. What actions should be taken by all stakeholders to implement it ?

(d) Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers requires attention to technical details. Given that training, equipment level, medical conditions, and the use of new technologies in peacekeeping operations have a significant impact on the

security of peacekeepers, what specific actions should be taken to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers?

#### **IV. Format of the meeting**

8. The meeting will take the form of a videoconference, chaired by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun. The Security Council will hear briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support (to be confirmed). Non-members of the Council are encouraged to submit written statements, through the eSpeakers module on the e-deleGATE+ platform, which will be included in the official record of the discussion.

**Enclosure**

[Original: English]

**Guidance Note: submission of written statements****Security Council open debate on the theme “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers”**

With reference to the Security Council open debate on the theme “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers” to be held as a videoconference on 24 May 2021, delegations may submit written statements through the eSpeakers module.

Member States wishing to do so should transmit their statements in Microsoft Word format with a cover letter, duly signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'affaires and addressed to the President of the Security Council, no later than the date of the meeting, 24 May 2021. The statements will be published as part of an official compilation document containing the interventions submitted in connection with the open videoconference debate.

- Delegates are invited to contact their access focal points to be granted access to the eSpeakers module on the e-deleGATE+ platform.
- Delegates can submit written statements by clicking on the eSpeakers sub-item in the Security Council menu item.

For technical support related to user logins and passwords, please contact the Office of Information and Communications Technology help desk at 212 963 3333 or by email at [missions-support@un.int](mailto:missions-support@un.int).

For other questions related to the open debate, please contact the Security Council Affairs Division at [dppa-scsb3@un.org](mailto:dppa-scsb3@un.org).

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