

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
17 May 2021

Original: English

Letter dated 14 May 2021 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 briefing provided by Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, the Niger, Norway, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “The situation concerning Iraq” convened on Tuesday, 11 May 2021. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Iraq.

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

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**

We are now five months away from the all-important national elections, which are scheduled to take place on 10 October. These elections were a central demand of the protest movement. However, many of members of the protest movement continue to be persecuted with rampant impunity. The assassination of prominent activist Ihab Jawad Al-Wazni just two days ago, by unidentified gunmen in front of his house in Karbala, is yet another tragic example of this.

Now, they may think they have silenced a voice. The truth is that they have only amplified it. Our hearts go out to his loved ones and all of those who have lost friends and family in the fight to have their voices heard.

The promise of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) recovery is in sight, with the beginnings of a vaccination campaign. At the same time, like many other countries, Iraq is struggling, with a recent large spike in cases nationwide. An increase in oil prices has provided some budgetary breathing room, yet the economy remains in dire need of structural reform. And while Iraqi leaders call for stability as a prerequisite for progress, violent attacks against both civilian and military targets continue with troubling regularity. These are but a few examples of the daily struggle in Iraq.

As we speak, and for the second year in a row, Iraqis have had to mark Ramadan, and will soon celebrate Eid, while observing safety measures that are as restrictive as they are necessary.

I would like to take this opportunity to again express my sincere condolences to those who lost friends and family members in the tragic fire at Ibn al-Khatib hospital in Baghdad last month.

With regard to economics and finance, on 31 March, after months of intense political negotiations, the Council of Representatives approved — at long last — the federal budget law for 2021. While any budget is a work involving compromise, we do note that efforts to control public spending and invest in the private sector were thwarted as the budget law underwent parliamentary revision.

It is also a matter of concern that the budget remains heavily reliant on the oil sector, which accounts for roughly 80 per cent of Government revenues under the 2021 projections. Although oil prices have since risen, volatility in 2020 wreaked havoc on the country's gross domestic product, turning surpluses into deficits and putting pressure on public debt and foreign currency reserves.

Looking beyond COVID-19, the economic outlook will depend on both structural reform and the oil markets. Needless to say, only one of these elements is in Iraq's control. Simply put, a continued dependency on oil is not a solid strategy; in fact, such a strategy is far from solid.

On this note, modest — indeed, minimal — progress can be reported on the implementation of Iraq's recent economic white paper. The Ministry of Finance has been disbursing quick loans to small- and medium-sized enterprises, and some private sector investment is taking place in the infrastructure, health-care, education and tourism sectors.

But one cannot overemphasize the importance of tangible results for the population. Further, one cannot overstate the need for transparency, good governance and integrity in achieving these results. In other words, the return on investment must benefit the Iraqi people and not illicitly flow into private pockets.

Turning to the vital relationship between Baghdad and Erbil, as Council members have heard me say before, we remain in ad hoc compromise mode. Despite

some intermittent successes in the form of one or two specific agreements, we are still in dire need of a long-term, constitutional way forward.

Parties continue to express their willingness to come to the table, but in the absence of institutionalized, regular, structured dialogue, sustainable progress will remain elusive. As a case in point, the budget I was just referring to includes a deal on revenue-sharing between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government, which was reached following lengthy negotiations. However, as elsewhere, the devil is in the details, given that ambiguous wording opens the door to divergent interpretations and mutual accusations of non-compliance.

That bodes ill for the future of Baghdad-Erbil relations. It is also worrisome in the context of the upcoming elections, since disagreements could easily be exploited to amplify divisions.

It is my hope that the Kurdish calls for stepped-up United Nations mediation will bear fruit. However, for that to happen, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq needs the buy-in of the federal authorities as well. One thing is clear: the all-important Baghdad-Erbil relationship urgently requires sustained, strategic dialogue as well as clear-cut implementation mechanisms. I have to admit that my experiences thus far do not lend themselves to optimism in this regard.

On a separate note, the recent efforts of the Kurdish presidency aimed at seeking to build greater Kurdish unity are encouraging. A federation is only as strong as the bonds between its components, and these bonds are strengthened by community reconciliation and cohesion.

Turning to elections, as I mentioned at the outset of my briefing, we are mere months away from a milestone in the brief history of Iraq's young democracy. I am pleased to note that all necessary laws have now been adopted, including the Federal Supreme Court law. Our technical support for the Independent High Electoral Commission, is ongoing, and we remain committed to assisting Iraq in delivering these elections.

Having said that, I reiterate my call to all Iraqi stakeholders to uphold the integrity of the electoral process. The world is watching. Political pressure or interference, intimidation and illicit financial flows are all extremely harmful to the credibility of elections, and therefore to turnout. And as I also said before, candidates, campaigners, the media and voters must be free to exercise their democratic rights before, during and after the election.

For elections to be trusted, disinformation must be combated with facts, and intimidation must be replaced with accountability. The people of Iraq spoke loudly and clearly when they demanded these elections; too many of them had to pay the ultimate price. Now is therefore not the time to let them down.

The failure to hold credible elections would cause significant, lasting, widespread anger and disillusionment, which in turn could further destabilize the country at a time when strength and unity are desperately needed. Furthermore, to avoid any misunderstanding, let me underline once again that the October elections are and will remain at all times Iraqi-owned and Iraqi-led, which means that the Iraqi authorities and stakeholders bear the full and ultimate responsibility.

As I have stated many times, accountability for serious crimes and human rights violations remains limited — very, very limited. Despite public statements expressing intent to ensure accountability and the establishment of investigative committees, there have been few prosecutions for the killing and serious injury of protestors. No information has been made public on the patterns of violent attacks against demonstrators and critics, attributed to so-called “unidentified armed actors”.

Now, this climate of continued impunity for serious crimes and human rights violations, such as targeted killings, abductions and intimidation, can only embolden perpetrators, further eroding trust in the State and raising serious concerns ahead of the October elections.

Different, but also worrisome, are the developments in the Kurdistan region over the past year. These developments give rise to concern about the active curtailment of free expression. Critics of public authorities have risked not only intimidation, movement restrictions and arbitrary arrest, but some were also charged with defamation, and others, more recently, were prosecuted under national security laws.

Let me say some words on Kirkuk and Sinjar. With regard to Kirkuk, I note that, for two years now, we have been facilitating dialogue between representatives of the components of Kirkuk. An agreement, however, has still not been reached. I would like to use this opportunity to urge all stakeholders to spare no effort and to conclude a fair agreement without further delay. The people of Kirkuk deserve to live in stable and prosperous conditions.

With regard to Sinjar, representatives of the federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments are engaged in discussions around the security provisions in the agreement reached last October. These provisions have not yet been implemented, hindering progress on administration and reconstruction. Here too, the absence of an institutionalized dialogue and implementation mechanism between Baghdad and Erbil is being negatively felt, fuelling misperceptions and distrust.

One brighter development is the passing of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law. The provision of reparations to survivors and the legal recognition of the atrocities against women and girls of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) as crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity further underscore the need to hold the perpetrators accountable for the crimes they committed.

With regard to security, progress is being made in combatting the remnants of ISIL, with international support at the request of Iraq, but terrorism continues to claim far too many innocent lives.

Also of grave concern is the fact that rockets and improvised explosive devices remain a constant in Iraqi life. Cynical and callous armed entities continue to seek to destabilize the country. And despite the Government's objective of bringing all arms under State control, we are witnessing the use of new capabilities by non-State actors, with potentially devastating effects.

Now, on the regional/international front, as I have said many times, the Iraqi Government is deeply committed to playing a constructive regional role rather than falling victim to external tensions. We are seeing early signs that this commitment is paying off.

And yes, Iraq has great potential to operate as an honest broker, promoting peace and stability in the region. But to truly succeed, and at the risk of repeating myself, this should go hand in hand with concrete actions focused on bringing all arms under State control.

More broadly, I would like to call, once again, for all parties to respect the principles of State sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, over the past seven months, 16 camps have been closed or reclassified, affecting around 50,000 Iraqis. These closures, often carried out at short notice, did not always permit the necessary preparations for families to safely return to areas of origin.

Needless to say, when camps are closed before return conditions are appropriate, Iraqis face dire consequences. Families are rejected by home communities, denied protection by local authorities, stranded by security escorts en route, and even physically attacked. This is certainly not the path towards recovered and stabilized communities.

The position of the United Nations remains unchanged. We fully understand and support the goal of the Iraqi authorities to end displacement. However, durable solutions must be in place to succeed in doing so. In other words, the focus must be on solving displacement rather than closing camps.

On the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, the human remains of an additional eight Kuwaiti missing persons and one third-country national were identified since I last briefed this Council (see S/2021/152). Additionally, the remains of an Iraqi soldier were handed over by Kuwait to Iraq, in the first transfer of its kind since 2013.

I extend my heartfelt condolences to all the families of the missing persons, who have long awaited information about the fate of their loved ones.

Despite coronavirus disease-related challenges, the persistent efforts by the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Tripartite Commission have collectively yielded progress. And it is my sincere hope that this cooperation will yield further positive advancements in the months to come.

Allow me, in closing, to emphasize once again the importance of credible elections. At this critical juncture, transparency and the rule of law must prevail. A trusted electoral process, with free and wide-ranging participation, can help steer the country towards the safe and prosperous future Iraqis deserve. The way to express one's voice, to make one's choice, is at the ballot box.

This essential democratic exercise requires every voter, candidate, journalist and activist to play her part. Boycotting elections, and thus staying outside the electoral process, is risky business and potentially comes at a high cost.

Now, as the holy month of Ramadan draws to a close, I would like to end by conveying my best wishes to all those celebrating despite the restrictions.

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

[Original: Chinese and English]

China thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and welcomes the presence of the Permanent Representative of Iraq at today's meeting.

Let me begin by conveying to Ambassador Aluloom, and through him to the people of Iraq, our heartfelt sympathies and condolences over the heavy casualties sustained in last month's fire in Baghdad.

In the context of the Secretary-General's reports (S/2021/395 and S/2021/426) and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's briefing, I would like to make the following points.

First, Iraq remains in the grip of a grim security situation, which compels us to keep up our unwavering support for the country's counter-terrorism efforts. Remnants of the Islamic States in Iraq and the Levant continue to launch attacks in Iraq, which have caused civilian casualties in the hundreds so far this year. The international community should assist Iraq in effectively tackling the problem of foreign terrorist fighters and securing the hard-won gains in counter-terrorism. Provided that Iraq's judicial sovereignty be fully respected, it is necessary to give play to the role of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and support Iraq in bringing the terrorists to justice.

A peaceful Iraq is contingent upon a favourable regional setting. China encourages the parties concerned to respond positively to the Secretary-General's appeal, uphold the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States, fully respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and join in a collective effort to build a secure and stable future for Iraq. Any military operations to take place on the soil of Iraq must have the prior consent of the Iraqi Government. Iraq should not fall victim to geopolitical manoeuvres. We commend and support the close cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait on the issue of missing persons and property.

Secondly, it is necessary to support Iraq in completing this year's important political agenda, namely, the upcoming general elections. Iraq has taken active steps to move forward with the preparations and has made significant progress, which China welcomes. We encourage the Iraqi Government to continue its efforts to ensure peaceful and smooth elections that fully reflect the views of the Iraqi people.

Iraq has twice written to the President of the Security Council on election-related issues (see S/2020/1130 and S/2021/135). The United Nations should take into account the Iraqi side's request and established practice and play a positive and constructive role in the smooth conduct of the Iraqi elections. China has provided Iraq's Independent High Electoral Commission with a video-teleconferencing system and office computers. We will soon be delivering the second batch of materials for the elections as part of our aid package.

Thirdly, greater unity is vital to maintaining stability in Iraq. China welcomes the agreement reached between the Iraqi central Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the 2021 budget law through dialogue and consultation. We support maintaining the current positive momentum between the two sides in their continued pursuit of lasting solutions to issues of mutual concern.

China commends Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi's call for a national dialogue and hopes that all parties in Iraq will participate in the dialogue actively and

constructively so as to enhance unity and friendship, achieve inclusive reconciliation and accelerate integration and development.

Fourthly, we should support Iraq in addressing the challenges related to the coronavirus disease pandemic. The recent resurgence of the pandemic in Iraq is a cause for great concern. The international community should continue to provide support to Iraq in its fight against the disease, focusing on the equitable distribution of vaccines. We call on countries in a position to do so to actively provide assistance to Iraq.

Since the outbreak of the pandemic, China has dispatched a medical expert team and provided a number of shipments of supplies to help Iraq combat the disease. We have also assisted in building a nucleic acid testing laboratory and sent two consecutive batches of vaccines to help Iraq tide over the crisis.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert and her team for their work. China's supports the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. China will continue to work with the international community to support Iraq in achieving lasting peace, development and prosperity.

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

I would like to thank Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing.

We reiterate our solidarity with, and support for, the Iraqi Government and people, who continue to face political, economic and security challenges. We believe that the solution to most of those challenges lies in dialogue, at both the national and the regional levels.

We welcome Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's call for an Iraqi national dialogue. An inclusive dialogue among all political forces, communities and groups of society, including women and young people, will strengthen the social fabric and promote reconciliation.

The planned parliamentary elections are a crucial element in the path towards stability and restoring trust in Iraq's political system. We call upon all Iraqi stakeholders to contribute to a conducive environment for holding credible, transparent and inclusive elections. The establishment of a higher committee to promote and monitor women's electoral participation and to prevent violence against women candidates is a welcome step.

The continued role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in supporting Iraq in the electoral preparations and processes is essential and contributes to Iraq's readiness for the elections. The Security Council must carefully consider the most feasible way to respond to Iraq's request for election observation.

We welcome the adoption of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law by the Iraqi Parliament, as it is an important step towards reconciliation and accountability and addresses the important issue of conflict-related sexual violence. We also urge the Government of Iraq to take further steps to ensure accountability for violations against protesters, civil society activists and journalists, while stressing the importance of protecting the freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

It is deeply worrisome that attacks against diplomatic missions and the personnel of the Global Coalition against Da'esh continue. We strongly condemn such attacks and reiterate our continued support for Iraq's fight against Da'esh. We also reiterate the need for all actors to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and to refrain from any military action, which would threaten the stability of Iraq. We also call upon the Government of Iraq for additional measures to ensure State control over all armed forces.

We fully support the steps by the Government of Iraq towards urgently needed reforms to improve the socioeconomic situation and governance, and we reiterate our call to implement the measures proposed in the white paper.

Finally, we welcome the agreement between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government on the Federal Budget Law, which is another successful example of resolving disagreements through dialogue and will hopefully contribute to increased economic and political stability for the whole country.

Annex IV**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nathalie Broadhurst Estival**

[Original: French]

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, for her briefing, and I wish to assure her of France's full support in the conduct of her duties. I would also like to welcome the presence of the representative of Iraq among us today. Lastly, I would like to pay tribute to the victims of the fire at the Ibn Al-Khatib hospital on 24 April and to reiterate France's solidarity with Iraq at this difficult time.

Our meeting falls on the eve of the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. We have heard the Iraqi authorities' request for United Nations support for the elections. We hope that the Security Council will respond positively to them, taking into account the constraints weighing on the work of the United Nations in Iraq. The international community must be present to enable the organization of a free and transparent election in which women can fully participate. In that regard, the establishment of the high-level committee to monitor women's participation is a very positive development. Apart from the Council, we encourage Iraq's partners and regional organizations requested by Iraq to also assist in monitoring the upcoming elections, in accordance with the Iraqi requests. In addition to the elections, the international community must mobilize to support Iraq in affirming its sovereignty.

On the domestic front, reforms have been announced to meet the legitimate aspirations of the population. They must now be implemented so as to modernize the economy and tackle corruption. It is also essential that the perpetrators of abuses against protesters be brought to justice. We also call for those responsible for the murder of the activist Ihab Al-Wazni, who was killed in Karbala on Saturday, to be identified and brought to justice. The resumption of violence against Iraqi civil society is a particularly worrisome development as the country prepares for elections that are important to its future.

It is essential that Iraqis be able to exercise their constitutional freedoms of expression and assembly. That is particularly necessary for the success of the national dialogue that has been announced by the Prime Minister.

In terms of security, it is also crucial that Iraq remain free from regional tensions and that its territorial integrity be respected. We are convinced that Iraq can be the source of a positive regional dynamic, and we encourage the balanced diplomacy promoted by the Iraqi Government. It can serve as an example of coexistence for the whole region, as demonstrated by the recent visit of Pope Francis to the country.

A sovereign Iraq also requires effective State control over all armed groups. It is also essential to continue the fight against Da'esh. In the context of a threat that has not disappeared but has changed, the assistance of the international coalition at the request and in support of the Iraqi authorities remains indispensable. In that regard, we call for the security of the coalition's bases and forces to be ensured.

The stabilization and reconstruction of areas liberated from Da'esh are also a priority, in particular to facilitate the return of displaced persons. To that end, the Sinjar agreement must be fully implemented. We also welcome the projects launched in Mosul as part of the Revive the Spirit of Mosul initiative, supported by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Finally, the fight against

impunity is essential in turning the page on Da'esh. In that respect, we welcome the adoption of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law.

From a humanitarian and health perspective, ensuring equitable access to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine is also critical. In that regard, the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility has a key role to play. We must ensure that internally displaced persons (IDPs) continue to receive assistance when they leave the camps, particularly with regard to health. I reiterate the need for the return of IDPs to be voluntary and to be carried out in a safe and dignified manner.

The stability and prosperity of Iraq also depend on a relationship of trust between Baghdad and Erbil. The adoption of the 2021 budget is a positive development. We hope that the dialogue will continue in order to resolve all outstanding issues between the two capitals.

Finally, I would like to conclude by welcoming the progress made on the issue of missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals. The identification of the remains of eight Kuwaiti nationals and one Saudi national is a positive development. We hope that cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait on that issue will continue.

Annex V**Statement by the Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, T.S. Tirumurti**

I thank Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing. I take this opportunity to congratulate her Deputy Special Representative, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, who recently assumed office. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Iraq, Ambassador Mohammad Hussein Bahr Aluloom, to this meeting.

Let me begin by reiterating India's firm support for the Government of Iraq's efforts to achieve peace, stability, economic recovery through reform and reconstruction and national reconciliation. India has always responded to the urgent needs of Iraq. In the past, we supported the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq and contributed through the World Food Programme. Our Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme continues and has grown from strength to strength over the years.

With the passage of the First Amendment Law to the Federal Supreme Court Law and the decision of the Parliament to dissolve itself ahead of the elections, scheduled for 10 October, the main bottlenecks have been cleared for the holding of early elections. I applaud the steps taken by the Iraqi authorities and the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) to ensure a free, fair and inclusive electoral process despite the constraints of the pandemic. The support and technical assistance extended by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the United Nations Development Programme to the IHEC in its efforts to ensure full preparedness for the elections is much appreciated.

High voter turnout in the upcoming elections will be key to ensuring a Parliament and a Government that are representative of all Iraqis. It will also ensure that the Government has the confidence of the people of Iraq. United Nations and international observation of the elections, as requested by the Government of Iraq, will help to build that confidence among the Iraqi people, and India therefore fully supports that request. It is important for the Security Council to respond to Iraq's request positively.

The elections cannot be considered truly inclusive without the full and effective participation of Iraqi women. In that regard, the steps taken by the Government to promote women's electoral participation and to prevent and address violence against women candidates, including through the establishment of a higher committee, are positive developments.

Successful post-conflict recovery and economic development in Iraq will require stability and security in the country. We are concerned at the increasing number of attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq. Our heartfelt condolences go to the people of Iraq who have lost loved ones in those dastardly attacks. The tireless efforts of the Iraqi authorities to combat terrorism in the country need to be complemented by greater cooperation from the international community. We cannot afford to lower the guard against the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or other terrorist groups in Iraq. We must learn from past lessons regarding the consequences of misplaced complacency against terrorism. Thirty-nine Indian nationals were brutally killed by ISIL, and we hope to see a day when we do not lose the lives of more innocent civilians to terrorism.

We welcome the adoption of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law. The implementation of that key legislation and the recent Sinjar agreement will help Iraq to move closer to achieving justice for the victims of the crimes perpetrated by ISIL.

They will also contribute to restoring normalcy to the lives of survivors, enhance their quality of life and pave the way for their safe return through the reconstruction of areas ravaged by terrorism.

Despite the efforts of the Government of Iraq to provide protection to all diplomatic missions, attacks against diplomatic establishments and the coalition forces have continued. Such attacks threaten Iraq's stability and risk escalating tensions. The stability of Iraq should be of paramount importance to the region. We hope that a long-term solution can also be found to the issue of the possession of weapons by armed groups and other non-State actors.

The violations of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the pretext of counter-terrorism operations must come to an end. Iraq's neighbouring countries need to work with the Iraqi authorities to address all the security challenges they face.

The recent visit of Pope Francis to Iraq highlighted the rich cultural diversity and multireligious heritage of the country. The visit also contributed to a positive debate on furthering religious tolerance, peaceful coexistence and ensuring that no one is left behind. That is critical to achieving national reconciliation and sustaining peace in Iraq. The call for an inclusive national dialogue by the Prime Minister is also a step in the right direction.

The passage of the Federal Budget Law provides a positive beginning for the resolution of differences between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. We encourage both sides to seize the momentum and conclude a mutually satisfactory long-term sustainable agreement on all outstanding issues. Such discussions can also be part of the proposed national dialogue.

We take note of the efforts made by the Iraqi Government to resolve the issue of internally displaced persons in the country. The international community should fully respect Iraq's sovereignty and jurisdiction and support its efforts to address this issue in accordance with its relevant domestic laws.

India takes positive note of the recent identification of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals from the remains sent by Iraqi authorities last year and the return of the remains of a missing Iraqi soldier from Kuwait. These efforts will provide solace to the families of the deceased. With the excellent cooperation between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti authorities and the support extended by the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international partners, India is hopeful that further progress can be achieved on this issue quickly, bringing a mutually satisfactory closure.

Let me conclude by reaffirming India's steadfast support for Iraq's unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. India shares a civilizational relationship with Iraq. We have always been supportive of a democratic, pluralistic, federal, unified and prosperous Iraq fulfilling the aspirations of its citizens. As a long-standing friend, India will remain a willing partner of Iraq in its nation-building endeavours to deliver prosperity to its people.

Annex VI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason**

I want to thank Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her really insightful briefing this morning. Also, I want to welcome the representative of Iraq among us today.

I would like to begin by extending our deepest condolences to the people of Iraq following the tragic fire at Ibn Al-Khatib hospital in April. That was a terrible tragedy, and it came at a time when we know the Iraqi people are facing the devastating effects of coronavirus disease. Our thoughts and our prayers are certainly with the families of the victims and of all those affected by the tragedy.

Ireland welcomes the commitment of the Iraqi Government to free and fair elections in October. We welcome the important preparatory steps we are seeing now being taken by the Iraqi authorities to that end since our last discussion back in February (see S/2021/152). This includes the passing of an amendment to the Federal Supreme Court law, the appointment of members of the Court and the vote by the Council of Representatives to dissolve itself in the days running up to the election, which are important steps.

The establishment of a higher committee to promote and monitor women's electoral participation as well as introduce measures to prevent and address violence against women is also welcome, and we see these as very positive steps.

The recommendation by the High Electoral Commission to register internally displaced persons to vote is a significant one, and we encourage that it be enacted without delay. Let me underline again today that it is absolutely critical that the political and electoral process include all parts of Iraq's diverse society in order to be a successful process.

The international community of course has an important role to play in constructively supporting peaceful, inclusive and democratic elections in October. We commend the crucial work carried out by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in assisting with preparations to date. The Security Council should work intensively and promptly to see how it can best assume its responsibilities to Iraq and enhance and maximize its role as Iraq undertakes such a critical process for the Iraqi people's future.

Just yesterday, the Security Council was privileged to hear once more the striking testimony of Nadia Murad (see S/2021/460). The passing of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law represents a ground-breaking moment in efforts to redress the immense suffering of her community and of women from other minority groups at the hands of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, including conflict-related sexual and gender-based violence. True accountability for survivors, through prosecution and conviction for these heinous crimes, is now needed — and urgently. In the words of Ms. Murad during yesterday's briefing, "transforming evidence into justice and accountability requires action". We urge Iraq to put in place the legislative framework necessary for this to happen.

Ireland remains concerned by reports of continued terrorist attacks across the country. We once again reiterate our firm rejection of any attempts to destabilize Iraq. The peace and stability of Iraq is not only essential for the prosperity of its own people, but indeed for the entire region.

The rights to freedom of expression and assembly are already enshrined in Iraq's Constitution. However, we continue to witness violations of these rights and a

lack of fair-trial guarantees. The assassination of a prominent activist in Karbala and attacks against a journalist in Al-Diwaniyah are deeply troubling and unacceptable. We urge federal and regional Governments to redouble efforts to protect and defend these rights and to end impunity.

The adoption of the 2021 Federal Budget Law in March was an important milestone, and a real demonstration of what constructive dialogue and compromise between authorities in Baghdad and Erbil can achieve. We call on all parties to continue this spirit of cooperation and to faithfully implement the budget agreement. Furthermore, we welcome the efforts of the Government of Iraq to combat corruption and to ensure that those found guilty of corruption be held accountable for their crimes.

Like others, we were also pleased to see further progress on the identification of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, as well as on the return of missing Kuwaiti property, during the past months. We hope that progress on this important legacy issue continues.

Finally, I would like to reiterate again Ireland's strong support for the excellent and critical work being carried out by the Special Representative and her team. We look forward to the renewal of UNAMI's mandate at the Security Council in the coming weeks.

Annex VII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, Martin Kimani**

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Henniss-Plasschaert for her briefing and take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) (S/2021/426).

On the political situation, Kenya commends the preparations for elections, which we urge should be inclusive, transparent, free and credible and lays a solid foundation for social cohesion, political stability and State-building. The recent establishment of a higher committee to promote and monitor women's participation in the electoral process is indeed a positive step on inclusivity. Kenya supports Iraq's request for the involvement of the United Nations in observing these elections.

We also welcome the European Union's contribution to a United Nations-led project to support capacity-building within the Independent High Electoral Commission in preparation for the October 2021 elections. We further welcome the robust support for the elections highlighted by the United States of America.

Furthermore, Kenya takes note of other positive developments, including the establishment of the Supreme Court, as well as progress on the Federal Budget Law by the Council of Representatives on 31 March.

We recognize that progress was made after lengthy negotiations among political parties and the federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments. We encourage the parties to sustain this positive momentum by coordinating the implementation of commitments and inclusive national dialogue. Such action will build much-needed trust and ease political tensions ahead of the forthcoming elections.

Kenya also welcomes the enactment of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law as major step towards addressing the needs of survivors of atrocities, committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), particularly against the Yazidis, Turkmens, Christians and Shabaks.

On the security situation, Kenya condemns the recent violent attacks in the north. We call on UNAMI to work on the de-escalation of military operations that are threatening the lives of the population, including the vulnerable, especially women and children.

We further condemn the Da'esh/ISIL attacks in several governorates of Iraq, including the recent attacks in Sadr city, east of Baghdad. We insist that terrorists should be treated as such and should not be legitimized through classification as political actors.

We must continue to support the role of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant in holding ISIL accountable for crimes committed in the country. Moreover, it is paramount that Iraq be protected from becoming an international arena for States and non-State actors to settle scores to the detriment of the security, political stability, and socioeconomic progress of the people of Iraq.

Kenya takes note of the commendable progress made in the identification of Kuwaiti missing persons, as well as Kuwaiti property. We encourage continued dedicated cooperation and look forward to further progress on this file.

This finally leads me to the humanitarian situation. With the thousands of Iraqis that reside in the Al-Hol camp in Syria, the repatriation of citizens from the camps and the prioritization of disengagement capabilities, as well as capacity-building, is essential for the region.

Furthermore, Kenya welcomes the United Nations and the Government of Iraq's 2021 humanitarian response plan to assist 1.5 million vulnerable people, especially given that 4.1 million Iraqis remain in need of humanitarian and protection assistance.

In closing, Kenya reiterates its call for all actors to uphold the political independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. We reaffirm our support for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in its assistance to the Government and people of Iraq in advancing inclusive political dialogue, as well as national and community-level reconciliation.

I have some questions for the Special Representative. What is the progress of Iraq in combating terrorism? Can you, Madam, let us know at what stage the prosecutions of ISIL fighters of Iraqi origin are in the national courts? What is your assessment of the popular and political support for the work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant?

Annex VIII**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez**

[Original: Spanish]

I thank Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her informative briefing, I also thank the representative of Iraq.

Mexico expresses its grave concern over the fragile security situation in Iraq and the numerous incidents of violence in various parts of the country. And we condemn, once again, in the strongest terms, the rocket attacks that struck the vicinity of Erbil airport and those against the Balad and Ayn Al-Asad airbases and call on all armed groups in Iraq to cease all acts of violence.

Furthermore, we appreciate the strong support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in the organization of the upcoming elections, as we recognize the importance of holding regular, free and transparent elections in the strengthening of any democratic State. We note the progress in the recruitment and training of election officials, and we welcome efforts to ensure the full, equal and substantive participation of women in the electoral process. We especially commend the establishment of a committee to promote and monitor women's electoral participation and to prevent and address possible cases of violence against women candidates.

In line with the same agenda, Mexico recognizes Iraq's actions to implement the women and peace and security agenda, including: first, the increase in the number of female public officials in high-ranking positions; secondly, the second national plan for the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000); and, as mentioned above, thirdly, the promotion of women's active participation in elections. We also welcome the recent approval by the Council of Representatives of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law, which condemns crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and gender-based violence committed by the Islamic State/Da'esh against members of the Yazidi, Turkmen, Christian and Shabak communities.

On the humanitarian front, we welcome the arrival of a batch of 336,000 vaccines for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility and the necessary organization required to receive and distribute 20 million vaccines. We hope that the vaccination campaign will be efficiently carried out as soon as possible.

On 3 March, authorities at the central prison of Nasiriyah executed three people who had been sentenced to death for terrorism. Those three executions are in addition to the 21 carried out last November. Mexico reiterates its rejection of the death penalty. Capital punishment constitutes a serious violation of human rights, in addition to reflecting degrading treatment with irreparable consequences. Mexico calls on the Government of Iraq to promote actions aimed at a moratorium on the application of the death penalty and its eventual abolition.

Finally, my country reiterates its commitment to the expeditious renewal of the mandate of UNAMI, for which we will work closely and in coordination with the members of the Security Council.

Annex IX**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Niandou Aougi**

[Original: French]

At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing. I also welcome the representative of Iraq to this meeting.

My country commends the efforts of the Iraqi Government to address the many crises facing the country and to steer it in a new direction.

My delegation supports the Prime Minister's call of 8 March for an inclusive national dialogue to restore Iraqi unity.

Iraq has suffered enormously from the wars, and its people aspire to a stable and prosperous life. The international community must play an important role in the country's new march toward stability and hope.

The Iraqi authorities' efforts to develop peaceful relations with neighbouring countries and to expand their regional and global partnerships are commendable. As the report of the Secretary General (S/2021/426) indicates, international cooperation remains key to addressing the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic, regional instability, climate change and many other issues.

However, with regard to the protection of human rights, my delegation remains deeply concerned about reports of continued arrests and acts of violence and intimidation against demonstrators, civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists. In particular, we condemn the recent killing of Ihab Al-Wazni, who was shot dead last Sunday outside his home. That makes 30 human rights defenders who have been murdered since 2019. Systematic attempts to threaten and prevent people from exercising their fundamental right to peaceful assembly and freedom of expression are unacceptable. We call on the Iraqi Government to protect and guarantee the human rights of all peaceful protesters, civil society activists and human rights defenders.

We also call on the Iraqi Government to take the necessary steps to fulfil its commitment to make operational the body responsible for investigating the killing of human rights activists and defenders and bringing the perpetrators to justice.

With regard to the electoral process, we reiterate our support for the efforts of the Iraqi Government, the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission in the preparations to ensure that the upcoming elections are free, fair, inclusive and credible.

My delegation calls on the United Nations and all its Member States to ensure that the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq has the necessary resources to support Iraq in the organization and holding of credible, free and fair elections, while fully respecting its sovereignty. The Security Council and all relevant United Nations entities must respond to the Iraqi Government's request to observe the elections.

The elections must also ensure the participation of all social strata of Iraqis. That is why we reiterate the importance of including women, who play an informal leadership role in their communities during conflicts, as well as youth, in the political process.

On the issue of missing persons, property and archives from Kuwait and third countries, my delegation encourages Iraq and Kuwait to strengthen their cooperation in order to address all outstanding issues. The recent identification of the human remains of eight Kuwaiti missing persons and one third-country national

are encouraging developments. Similarly, we also welcome Kuwait's handover of the remains of the Iraqi soldier to Iraq — the first of its kind since 2013.

In conclusion, the Niger would like to reiterate that as Iraq strives to recover from the deep crisis it has experienced in recent years, we must not lose sight of the fact that the victory over the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is not synonymous with its total eradication in this region of the world, as evidenced by the recent attacks on the Global Coalition to Defeat Da'esh in Iraq. We therefore call on the Iraqi authorities and the Global Coalition to Defeat Da'esh to remain vigilant and to continue the fight against terrorism in order to thwart the resurgence of the activities and machinations of those evil forces.

Annex X**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Mona Juul**

At the outset, we thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her briefing. We greatly appreciate UNAMI's work in Iraq and its support for the Independent High Electoral Commission in the preparations for early parliamentary elections in October.

We are pleased to see that following our most recent meeting in February (see S/2021/152), the Government of Iraq has taken important steps to prepare for the election, including the necessary amendment of the Federal Supreme Court law. We also commend the establishment of a higher committee to promote and monitor women's participation and to propose measures to prevent and address violence against women candidates.

We support the Iraqi request for United Nations election observation, and we call for a solution to be found — and a decision to be made — in that regard in the Council as soon as possible. Free, fair and transparent elections are vital for the integrity of, and public trust in, the electoral process, as well as for the stability of Iraq. Freedom of expression and assembly remain vital for the democratic development of Iraq.

Norway condemns the recent violence in Iraq, including the assassination of an activist, Ihab Al-Wazni, in Karbala last Sunday, and the shooting of a journalist in Diwaniyah yesterday. We call on the Iraqi authorities to find and hold the perpetrators accountable. As Iraq prepares for elections in October, the security and protection of all Iraqi citizens is essential.

Long-term stability cannot be achieved without addressing the underlying causes of conflict and instability. Economic, social and political reforms must be initiated and greater emphasis must be put on reconciliation efforts. Norway fully support Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's recent call for a comprehensive national dialogue following the historic visit of Pope Francis to Iraq in March. We also welcome progress on the federal budget law and the agreement between Baghdad and Erbil. We urge Baghdad and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to continue their dialogue in order to resolve all outstanding issues and promote further cooperation.

The implementation of the Sinjar agreement also needs more attention. It is critical that this be done through dialogue among the affected parties, and that the process lead to rebuilding and the provision of basic services. Norway also welcomes the adoption of the landmark Yazidi Female Survivors Law. Accountability and justice for survivors is essential to move towards national healing and reconciliation.

However, even amid these positive developments, there is still cause for concern and a need for concerted attention during this pivotal time for Iraq. The security situation remains fragile and volatile. We remain deeply concerned about the continued terrorist activity of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as well as the repeated attacks against coalition forces.

That said, the continued engagement between Iraq and its international and regional partners — aimed at furthering peace and regional stability — is encouraging. On this point, Norway would like to underline the additional need to address the issue of climate change and water scarcity. As stated in the Secretary-General's report (S/2021/426), joint challenges such as climate change require joint solutions in order to ensure a stable and secure future.

Sustained attention must also be given to the impact of displacement. While we welcome the Government's pause on the closure of internally displaced persons camps, we remain concerned by the overall grave humanitarian situation, and call for durable solutions. Returns must be safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable. The coronavirus disease pandemic has also significantly burdened Iraq, compounding these and other challenges. In that connection, we express our deepest sympathy to victims of the tragic fire at Ibn Al-Khatib hospital in Baghdad.

On a final note, we welcome the progress made on the return of Kuwait property and the repatriation of nationals of Kuwait and third countries, as well as their remains. We commend Iraq and Kuwait for their cooperation in bringing this humanitarian file to a close.

Annex XI**Statement by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Dmitry Polyanskiy**

[Original: Russian]

At the outset, let me express our deep regret that we again have to convene a meeting in an informal video-teleconference format, since nothing keeps us from returning to in-person meetings in the Security Council Chamber that meet all social-distancing requirements related to the coronavirus pandemic. The epidemiological situation in New York is gradually improving and the city is getting back to normal. Nevertheless, the hesitation of some of our colleagues to return to in-person meetings puts at risk the Security Council's. We request the Chinese presidency to make efforts to ensure that the Council can get back to its traditional form of work without further delay.

We thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, for her briefing. We again reiterate our support for the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) across all aspects of its mandate.

We are concerned about the numerous challenges that friendly Iraq faces. The deteriorating socioeconomic situation is inciting protests among the population. The state of affairs is further exacerbated by decreasing State revenues caused by plummeting oil prices and the spread of the coronavirus disease. Against that backdrop, underground terrorist units continue conducting raids.

We support the efforts of the Iraqi Government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi, to improve the situation in Iraq by ensuring safety and law and order in the country. At the same time, we understand that the authorities are facing problems that cannot be solved overnight. Socioeconomic and humanitarian aspects of the situation in Iraq require the attention and assistance of the global community, especially in the light of the pandemic and the need to restore areas devastated by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. We therefore welcome the adoption of the 2021 budget, which will help resolve several pressing issues, among them the organization of elections, the distribution of oil revenues and the implementation of social projects.

Combating terrorism remains highly relevant. Despite Iraq's progress in counter-terrorism, the security situation in the country remains fragile, inter alia due to a resurgence of underground terrorism. All those involved in the fight against terrorism in Iraq must remain committed to sovereignty of the Iraqi State and coordinate their actions with Baghdad.

One of priority tasks of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's Cabinet is to prepare for early parliamentary elections scheduled for October. We expect Iraq's leading political forces to achieve the much-needed unity on that issue. We welcome that Iraqis addressed the Security Council with a request to engage UNAMI in monitoring the parliamentary elections. In view of the extension of the UNAMI mandate, we are ready to have a targeted discussion on that issue in the Council.

The commitment of Baghdad and Kuwait City to promptly resolve all the outstanding issues in the Iraq-Kuwait file and the stable positive momentum of this process deserve our special support.

We reaffirm our consistent position that Iraq must not turn into an arena for regional confrontation. We call on all external stakeholders interested in stabilization in Iraq to refrain from taking actions that might negatively affect the situation in that

country. We appreciate Baghdad's efforts to build good relations with its neighbours. Hopefully, Iraq and other regional actors will deliver on their diplomatic potential in order to collectively promote peace and stability in the entire Middle East region on the basis of resolution 598 (1987) and the corresponding Russian position.

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

I too would like to thank Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and extend our gratitude to her and her team for their continued efforts in Iraq. I also welcome our colleague, Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom, Permanent Representative of Iraq.

We begin by recognizing the continued efforts of the Iraqi Government to ensure the holding of free, fair and credible elections, including through the passage of the First Amendment Law to the Federal Supreme Court law, which is necessary for the certification of electoral results. The continued support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to the Independent High Electoral Commission to facilitate thorough and effective preparation is crucial in that regard. The need for inclusive elections cannot be overstated. Accordingly, we welcome the Council of Ministers' focus on promoting and monitoring women's participation, as well as the General Secretariat's proposed measures to prevent and address violence against women candidates. This election is an opportunity to restore unity to Iraq. In that context, we further recognize Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's call for a comprehensive national dialogue geared towards enhancing mutual understanding among Iraqi communities and rebuilding the social fabric of Iraq.

We also take this opportunity to welcome the Yazidi Female Survivors Law passed by the Council of Representatives. This legislation is a milestone; it constitutes the first legal recognition by the Government of the crimes committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant against Yazidis, Turkmen, Christians and Shabaks as war crimes. The assistance and reparations to be provided under that legislation, as well as the exclusion of future amnesty for perpetrators of the crimes listed therein is a significant, commendable step. Further efforts to ensure justice must continue.

Amid the efforts to prepare for elections, the Government has had to divert attention to addressing the rise in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases. The COVID-19 vaccines delivered to Iraq through the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility programme and donated by COVAX partners are crucial in the fight against COVID-19. Furthermore, we welcome the efforts of the United Nations Development Programme to rehabilitate health-care facilities, and we commend the World Health Organization for its continued work with the Ministry of Health to ensure that COVID-19 risk-mitigation measures are in place. These are positive developments indeed, but we appeal to the international community to redouble efforts to enhance the Government's capacity to address the pandemic and its related economic and humanitarian challenges. We also call on all Member States to support the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Iraq.

We cannot talk about the humanitarian situation without recognizing the severe impact of climate change on Iraq — one of the most climate-vulnerable countries in the world. Year after year, record-breaking heat threatens the health of Iraqis, creates droughts and decimates agriculture and has turned water limitations into a water crisis. The impact of years of conflict on the environment, as well as a new kind of warfare — the disregard of major emitters far away, have turned this ancient land filled with history into a modern epicentre of the climate crisis. We welcome all efforts to address the climate emergency and vulnerabilities and call on those most responsible for it to take urgent action accordingly. We call for sustained support for the implementation of measures to build resilience to climate change and address issues such as water scarcity, as underlying risk factors cannot be delinked from the response to combat the challenges in the security landscape.

The identification and return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and property provides a level of closure to the victims' families. We welcome further progress towards identifying missing persons and property during the reporting period. The constructive collaboration between the Republic of Iraq and the State of Kuwait is essential to advance this humanitarian file. We recognize UNAMI's diligent efforts, as well as the role of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in supporting and facilitating progress.

Finally, we affirm our support to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert and UNAMI, and we stand in solidarity with the Iraqi people.

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

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her valuable briefing.

My delegation lauds the various important reforms that have been under way in Iraq for some time now. Those reforms deserve the full support and assistance of the international community. In that context, Tunisia encourages preparations for the October 2021 legislative elections to continue. In particular, the powers of the Federal Supreme Court should be expanded and its members appointed, voters should be registered, national observers should be appointed, and efforts to support the capabilities of the Independent High Electoral Commission and promote the participation of Iraqi women in the elections should continue. Those preparations would lay the foundation for fair, transparent and credible elections, delivering the security, peace and prosperity to which the Iraqi people aspire.

Tunisia endorses the Iraqi aspiration to strengthen the role of UNAMI in order to receive further guidance, support, assistance and observation, so as to ensure that these important elections are held successfully. We also appreciate Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's call for an inclusive national dialogue that will contribute to promoting political stability and national unity in Iraq.

We also reiterate that the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and all international instruments in order to spare the country the fate of being a theatre of regional conflict between external forces.

In keeping with the theme of reform, Iraq continues to take all necessary measures to tackle the difficult economic situation and implement the recommendations of the White Paper for Economic and Financial Reform on the ground. We also applaud the bold decisions to combat corruption and mismanagement, reflecting a forward-looking vision for building a developed and thriving Iraqi economy.

My delegation praises the reconciliation that has been achieved between the federal and Kurdistan Regional Governments. The enactment of the federal budget law constitutes another positive step towards settling unresolved differences and paving the way for peaceable and sustained relations for the good of Iraq.

Tunisia expresses its total solidarity with Iraq in the country's battle against the remnants of terrorist groups and continued attacks by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Tunisia calls on the international community to support Iraq in that struggle.

With regard to Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations, we express our satisfaction with the significant progress made on the humanitarian front and on the exchange of remains of identified persons. We greatly value the cooperation between the two States and their tireless efforts to consolidate it further, as well as the efforts by Iraq to uphold its obligations and continue the search for missing persons and the Kuwaiti archives.

In closing, my delegation supports the renewal of the mandate of UNAMI and appreciates the role of the Office and of United Nations agencies in supporting Iraqi efforts and contributing to the development of Iraqi capabilities in many areas.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Jonathan Allen**

Let me thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert and her team in the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq for their continued hard work in difficult circumstances.

Today I would like to focus my remarks on the elections, the economy, and humanitarian and security issues. Let me therefore start with the crucial question before us all — that of elections. Like the Permanent Representative of the United States and others today, I want to underline that this is a pivotal year for Iraq. The elections in October could be a defining moment and a step towards increased stability. It is essential that those elections are seen by the Iraqi people as delivering a representative result. To that end, I welcome the Government of Iraq's determination to hold free, fair and credible elections. The United Kingdom is fully committed to Iraq's democratic process, and we look forward to discussions on how the United Nations can significantly enhance its support to the elections alongside the ongoing package of technical assistance. While on the elections, let me also welcome the establishment of a higher committee to promote and monitor women's electoral participation and propose measures to prevent and address violence against women candidates.

Let me turn now to economics. Although it is welcome that Iraq's Parliament has approved the 2021 budget, we note that many of the more ambitious measures aimed at economic reform were removed. This runs the risk of continued Iraqi vulnerability to oil price fluctuations, which in turn undermines the country's achievement of sustainable and inclusive development and its ability to mitigate poverty. We would therefore urge the Government to continue to pursue these much-needed economic reforms.

In that context, let me welcome the Special Representative's continued engagement and support for the Government of Iraq's anti-corruption efforts. As the Iraqi Government has itself acknowledged, tackling corruption is vital to Iraq's economic development and to building stability in the country. It is important that these efforts adhere to criminal procedures that include due process, fairness and transparency reflective of Iraq as a democratic system.

We remain concerned by the humanitarian situation for the country's 1.2 million internally displaced people (IDPs) and the closure of camps established for them. Since 2014, the United Kingdom has committed over \$380 million in humanitarian support to Iraq, providing a vital lifeline to millions with shelter, medical care and clean water. We welcome the recent presentation by the Government of Iraq of its national plan for returning IDPs, and we urge the Government to prioritize finding sustainable and durable solutions for the country's IDP population and to coordinate closely with the United Nations to ensure that all returns are safe, dignified and voluntary.

Let me also say that we were pleased to see the first delivery of vaccines to Iraq from the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) Facility on 25 March, which was part of Iraq's own plan to vaccinate its vulnerable people. The United Kingdom has given \$750 million to the COVAX Facility, and we are proud that the Group of Seven countries overall have pledged over \$7 billion.

On the security side, I want to condemn the recent attacks in the Iraqi Kurdistan region and support the Government's investigation to ensure that those responsible

are held accountable. Continuing attacks across the country by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Shams (ISIS) undermine Iraq's stability and also demonstrate the importance of the ongoing work of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, in close partnership, of course, with the Iraqi security forces.

The Government of Iraq is striving to strengthen its relations with neighbours in the region. We continue to support that approach and reiterate the importance of dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey in combating terrorism, ensuring regional security and protecting civilians. In the context of relations with the region, let me commend the shared commitment of the Iraqi and Kuwaiti Governments to making progress on the missing Kuwaiti persons and property file, pursuant to resolution 2107 (2013), as demonstrated through Iraq's recent transfer of Kuwaiti property. The identification of the remains of an additional eight Kuwaiti missing persons was a really positive step. as demonstrated through Iraq's recent transfer of Kuwaiti property. The identification of the remains of an additional eight Kuwaiti missing persons was a really positive step.

Let me conclude by saying that the United Kingdom will continue to stand with the Government and the people of Iraq over these coming vital months as they work to advance the country's stability with well-run elections, the implementation of crucial economic reform and the effective combating of terrorism.

Annex XV

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Let me start by thanking the Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her very informative briefing, and I look forward to hearing from the representative of Iraq. We deeply appreciate the diligent and ongoing efforts of Special Representative and her staff, even as the coronavirus disease and uncertain security complicates their mission.

I would also like to start by expressing my heartfelt condolences to the people of Iraq for the devastating Ibn Al-Khatib Hospital fire. As we announced last week in Baghdad, the United States Agency for International Development is issuing a \$238,000 grant to completely refurbish and re-equip the hospital following this terrible tragedy.

Today I would like to discuss progress on two issues vital to Iraq's future — first, its forthcoming elections, and secondly, its economy — both of which, fundamentally, come down to trust. First, let me thank the Government of Iraq for requesting additional United Nations support for their forthcoming elections. Elections are the cornerstone of democracy, and, to build trust, they must be free and fair. We therefore take Iraq's request for United Nations support seriously. We appreciate how, under Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's leadership, the Iraqi Government is working diligently to fulfil its promise of credible early elections and to maximize turnout at a critical moment in Iraq's history. This is a top priority for us — for both the United States and the United Nations — and we all want to ensure the maximum possible support for Iraqi elections.

To that end, we aim to dramatically bolster provisions in the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to elevate the United Nations role in the Iraqi elections. We aim to authorize a United Nations operation capable of delivering the impact Iraq requested — a United Nations team sizable enough to deter fraud, increase turnout and rebuild trust in Iraq's democracy. That includes calling for a robust and visible United Nations team to monitor Iraq's election day and report to the Secretary-General on the election process. UNAMI's increased technical electoral assistance team will be larger, more advanced and better equipped than prior election teams — and it will be the largest United Nations technical electoral assistance mission in the world. Combined, this enhanced electoral support will eclipse the United Nations efforts in 2018.

The reason for this more robust team is clear: violence by armed actors against citizens, security forces and journalists threatens to undermine the election. We are very concerned by reports of militia harassment against activists, protesters and people who openly express criticism of armed groups operating outside of State control. For one, we absolutely condemn the May 9 assassination of protest leader Ihab Jawad Al-Wazni in Karbala. This assassination is part of a disturbing and unacceptable trend of attempting to silence independent voices in Iraq through violence.

Some of the perpetrators are militias aligned with Iran. They attack Iraqi bases hosting forces of the Global Coalition to Defeat Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham as well as supply convoys — both of which are in Iraq at its invitation — killing and injuring Iraqi citizens. Other violent groups also include Islamic State remnants still terrorizing citizens and killing members of Iraqi security forces in the liberated areas, including in the Kurdistan region. The United States will continue to stand with those seeking a peaceful and prosperous future for Iraq. Iraqis must be able to peacefully assemble and express their concerns.

For exactly the same reasons, Iraq deserves a thriving free press. World Press Freedom Day was last week. That day, I was reminded of the murder of Iraqi

journalist Ahmed Abdul Samad, who was gunned down in Basra last year. His brutal killing did not just take a life: it attacked a fundamental freedom all Iraqis deserve, namely, to have a free media that informs the public. Ahmed deserves accountability. He deserves justice, as do so many others.

Given this violence, and the violations they cause, Iraqis have the right to demand accountability from their Government. They deserve — and can demand — full Government support for upholding their rights. And all Iraqis should be free to express themselves or assemble peacefully, including journalists. Fighting for those and other rights and freedoms, including fair trials, is necessary for building the trust voters want and need.

Secondly, the United States remains committed to Iraq's economic development. We commend the passage of the 2021 federal budget law, and especially the spirit of compromise between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government contained within it. Fully and promptly implementing the provisions of the budget agreement will build economic reforms that will benefit all Iraqis. Similarly, we support the Iraqi Government's effort to implement the white paper for economic reforms. These mechanisms need to be implemented as soon as possible.

Ultimately, like real elections, real economic recovery is about trust. The corruption endemic to so much of Iraq undermines economic progress at every turn. Robust reforms to end corruption are the key to restoring trust in Iraq's political bodies. We therefore commend the Government for its efforts to build a foundation of trust — both for elections and for the economy — and we encourage continued, committed actions.

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

I thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her valuable briefing. I also thank all United Nations personnel and aid workers operating on the ground for their continued dedication to implementing the mandate of the Mission under challenging circumstances.

I welcome Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom, Permanent Representative of Iraq, to our meeting today.

In the face of current multiple and interlinked challenges in the country, we reaffirm our full support for concerted efforts undertaken by the Government of Iraq in continuing its preparation for the upcoming legislative elections in October. In this regard, we support the request of the Government of Iraq to the Security Council for election-related assistance. We continue to emphasize that the elections are of Iraq and must be led by Iraq.

We wish to see the elections to be held in a free, fair and inclusive manner, with broad participation by all segments of society, especially women and young people. In this regard, we are encouraged by the joint efforts undertaken by UN-Women and Iraqi institutions aimed at promoting and monitoring women's electoral participation and preventing violence against women candidates. We also commend UNAMI's assistance provided to the Independent High Electoral Commission so it could develop procedures to ensure that all eligible voters, including internally displaced persons, can cast their ballots.

We welcome the agreement between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government on budget issues. It is our hope that the agreement will pave the way for constructive discussions on outstanding issues between them. We note the efforts of the Iraqi Government to reach out to regional and international partners to explore opportunities for economic cooperation. We are in favour of strengthening cooperation between Iraq and countries of the region in dealing with common challenges. At the same time, we continue to call for full respect of Iraq's independence and territorial integrity by all regional and international actors.

Turning to humanitarian issues, we note reports that the Government of Iraq has paused the closure of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs). We welcome the development and implementation of the national plan for displacement and reconstruction. We urge the relevant Iraqi authorities and international partners to redouble their efforts to ensure the safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return or settlement of IDPs, and to avoid a crisis of secondary displacement at all costs. We are also pleased at the adoption of the Yazidi female survivors law that recognizes women survivors of conflict-related sexual violence and provides for assistance and reparations for survivors.

We join other members of the Council in commending the continued cooperation between the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait in the search for missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of Kuwaiti property. We welcome the recent DNA identification of missing Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian nationals, as well as the handover of the property to the Kuwaiti Government on 28 March. We value the assistance that UNAMI and the International Committee of the Red Cross provided to the national authorities so that they may fulfil their obligations in accordance with resolution 2107 (2013).

Before concluding, we would like to reaffirm Viet Nam's support for the mandate of UNAMI and United Nations agencies in assisting Iraq to maintain

stability and security as well as to provide humanitarian assistance to people severely affected by conflict, poverty and the coronavirus disease pandemic. We look forward to working with members of the Council to renew the mandate of UNAMI by the end of this month.

Annex XVII**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, allow me to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Zhang Jun, Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month.

I express my gratitude to Her Excellency Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her briefing.

Since the last Council meeting on the situation in Iraq in February 2021 (see S/2021/152), there has been no real change in the situation or the magnitude of the major and interrelated economic, security, health and social challenges facing my country, Iraq. The Government is continuously working to the best of its ability and at the highest levels, as promised, to meet the people's demands by maintaining peace and security, providing services, countering the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, fighting terrorism, instituting political and economic reforms and taking the necessary steps to prepare to organize free and fair elections.

The country's economic and financial situations are priorities for the Iraqi Government, which is seeking sustainable solutions. The Government has begun to implement the White Paper for Economic and Financial Reform to restructure the national economy by reducing dependence on oil revenues and promoting investment in different sectors, in addition to holding a vote on the 2021 budget in the Council of Representatives. Alongside this challenge, the Government is facing a significant increase in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases, which have exceeded a daily mark of 8,000. To confront these challenges, on 10 February the Council of Ministers decided to form a high reform committee headed by Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, and to accelerate the adoption of automation and e-governance procedures in all Government departments and institutions in order to strengthen anti-corruption efforts.

Since its formation, the current Government has resolved to fulfil the commitment it made to the people to respond to the demonstrators' demands. In that regard, the Government has sought to gain the people's confidence, especially that of young people, by listening to their voices and respecting the constitutional right to demonstrate peacefully and express oneself freely.

The Government has also promised to protect demonstrators from any human rights violations. The competent authorities have made significant efforts to prevent outlaw groups from targeting demonstrators and to reduce the number of incidents by adopting a number of measures, the most important of which is the prosecution of criminal gangs targeting demonstrators. My Government has also made strenuous efforts to compensate the victims and their families and to do more to hold the perpetrators of violations accountable by forming a fact-finding team to investigate the bloody events with a view to preventing such violations from recurring in the future. Appropriate legal action was taken, in accordance with the relevant domestic law, against members of the security services found to be involved in targeting demonstrators. An advisory council for the reconstruction of the governorates has been established, and a commission has been formed to investigate the recent violence. These efforts are part of the Iraqi Government's pledge to enforce the rule of law, restrict possession of weapons to the State and promote security reform efforts in government institutions in order to strengthen human rights procedures as part of its effort to enforce the rule of law. Considerable

security challenges persist, affecting government efforts in various areas. Terrorism, the greatest and most enduring threat, is foremost among them. In that regard, Iraq reiterates its commitment to continue to cooperate with the international community to combat terrorism and to continue to mobilize the capabilities of the competent national entities. Therefore, I am pleased to high-light two important points. The first pertains to the positive atmosphere that prevailed through-out the third round of strategic dialogue with the United States of America. The second concerns the determination of Iraq to provide support to victims of terrorism. The Council of Representatives enacted the Yazidi Female Survivors Law.

My Government stresses that it is fully committed to protecting the staff and premises of diplomatic and consular missions based in Iraq. In that connection, it is making every effort to prevent the recurrence of rocket attacks carried out by outlaw groups. In perpetrating such attacks, those groups seek to destabilize Iraq and adversely affect cooperation between the Government and the international community in the fight against terrorism. These formidable security challenges have not deterred Iraq from moving forward with the preparations to hold early, free and fair elections in response to the demands of the demonstrators. The most important of those measures are the enactment of the new expanded Federal Supreme Court law, and the decision of the Council of Representatives to dissolve itself on 7 October 2021 in preparation for the elections on 10 October. The Iraqi Government is determined to create a positive environment conducive to promoting dialogue with the Kurdistan Regional Government, concerning the budget, control of border crossing points and the management of oil resources in particular. It is also committed to ensuring that the meetings are intensive and are held regularly in order to reach a sustainable agreement on various issues.

My country, Iraq, places the idea of cooperation at the centre of its relations with Ku-wait and complies with the obligations set forth in paragraph 4 of resolution 2107 (2013), including searching for the remains of missing Kuwaitis and Kuwaiti property and continuing to cover compensation instalments in a timely manner.

Iraq continues to demonstrate that it is fully committed to paying compensation in a timely manner. Its most recent payment was \$380 million on 28 April 2021. Kuwait is owed an outstanding balance of only \$1.7 billion, out of an initial total of \$52.4 billion.

With regard to the question of missing persons, Iraq welcomes the announcement by the Kuwaiti authorities that the remains of eight of the missing persons have been identified, bringing the total number of persons identified to 28 of the 69 missing persons whose remains were handed over in two instalments since August 2019 have been identified. Meanwhile, Iraq calls on the Tripartite Commission and the State of Kuwait to accelerate the process of announcing the results of DNA tests of the remains of the other 41 persons and to make the announcement at the earliest opportunity.

The upcoming early elections are an essential part of the reform programme that the Iraqi Government has committed to implement. Given the importance of those elections, my Government addressed two letters to the Security Council, the second of which was sent in February 2021 requesting United Nations support in observing the elections.

Building and strengthening citizen confidence in the electoral process is a key factor in ensuring the success of the most important pillar of democracy, namely, elections. In that regard, the Government and people of Iraq trust that the United Nations will be impartial in set-ting standards of integrity and transparency in the electoral process and deterring violations on election day. Such is the trust that my Government wishes to establish in order to bolster and fully restore voter confidence in the electoral process, encouraging voters to participate actively so that the will of

the masses is expressed in the election results, which will, in turn, be reflected in the formation of a Government that draws its strength from broad popular support and that is able to meet various challenges, consolidate stability and combat terrorism.

My Government understands that the new election date of 10 October 2021 gives the United Nations time to address the Iraqi request more effectively while respecting the country's sovereignty and cooperating with the relevant national authorities.

In that connection, my Government endorses the contents of the penholder's proposal regarding the request of Iraq for election observation and hopes that Council members will support the proposal. Iraq also stresses that it is committed to providing comprehensive security in order to protect United Nations observers.

Lastly, I thank the Secretary-General for his position of unwavering support for Iraq by affirming respect for its sovereignty and territorial integrity and stressing that the international community must continue to support and cooperate ever more closely with Iraq in order to achieve prosperity and stability for the Iraqi people.

On behalf of my Government, I wish to express my appreciation for the efforts made by the Head and staff of UNAMI in various areas, particularly on humanitarian and development-related matters, during the period covered by the Secretary-General's report.
