

**Security Council**

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Letter dated 26 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 briefings provided by Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, and Mr. Gilles Michaud, Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security, 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 “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers” convened on Monday, 24 May 2021. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Brazil, who spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members for this video-teleconference, the following delegations and entities submitted written statements, copies of which are also enclosed: Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Fiji, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, the Netherlands, Pakistan, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand and Ukraine.

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

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



Annex 1**Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations,
Jean-Pierre Lacroix**

I thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to update the Security Council on the measures taken to strengthen the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. I am pleased to join Under-Secretaries-General Khare and Michaud in briefing the Council.

Peacekeeping operations continue to operate in complex environments, where they face an increasing number of attacks against their personnel by hostile actors. Since 1 January of this year alone, 15 peacekeepers have lost their lives owing to malicious acts. I want to express my deepest gratitude for the service and sacrifice of all peacekeepers, particularly those who have lost their lives in the pursuit of peace. One peacekeeper lost continues to be one too many. As our missions strive to implement their tasks, it is important to stress that attacks against peacekeepers can constitute war crimes; they are also a huge impediment to the pursuit of peace and an added constraint for the effective implementation of Security Council mandates.

In addition to hostile environments and direct attacks, issues related to peacekeeper safety, such as vehicle accidents and illnesses, are also causing fatalities and can significantly affect the ability of peacekeepers to deliver on their mandated tasks. In 2020, for example, 13 peacekeepers lost their lives to violent acts while 15 peacekeepers lost their lives due to accidents and 81 due to illness. This situation has, of course, been compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The international community has clearly identified the safety and security of peacekeepers as a paramount priority. Obviously, this is one of the top priorities of the Secretary-General and the Department of Peace Operations. I want to thank the People's Republic of China for its continued leadership in advancing this agenda, including through hosting today's debate and the recent creation of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, which it co-chairs with Brazil, Indonesia and Rwanda. We also continue to strive to do our part.

Building on the progress made through Action for Peacekeeping initiative (A4P), safety and security will continue to remain one of our highest priorities as we take forward A4P plus. We will continue to focus on implementing resolution 2518 (2020) and on taking forward the Action Plan to Improve the Security of United Nations Peacekeepers.

Implementation of the Action Plan has enabled us to make significant progress in strengthening the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. It contributed to a sustained decrease in peacekeeper fatalities resulting from malicious acts from 59 in 2017 to 13 in 2020. With our support, peacekeeping missions continued to strengthen camp protection. For example, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) has centralized command, control and coordination in its integrated camps, which has led to more expedient responses to imminent threats. We have also made notable progress in improving the capabilities within our missions. The use of specialized units, such as the tactical unmanned aerial surveillance unit in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), is contributing to the improvement of peacekeeping intelligence, situational awareness and early warning.

We have also revised existing guidance, processes and tools, and developed new ones. The revision of the casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) policy, and modifications to the Contingent-Owned Equipment Manual in 2020 tremendously streamlined

the evacuation process and reduced delays. We are in the process of establishing a systematic tracking system for violations of status-of-forces agreements, a phenomenon that is unfortunately growing in our missions, to enable us to more systematically support our missions to resolve them.

To complement efforts to strengthen policy and procedures, the Secretariat is also pursuing a number of training initiatives. These include stress testing for CASEVAC and crisis-management exercises, the Buddy First Aid Course, the Field Medical Assistant Course and the training of hospital commanders to ensure health-care quality and patient-safety standards. We are also providing mentorship and threat-mitigation training in relation to improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as part of our overarching efforts to mitigate the threat of IEDs, and we are seeing results. For example, in MINUSMA, the rate of IED detection and neutralization by peacekeepers on convoys and patrols has increased from 11 per cent of devices detected before detonation in 2014 to nearly 50 per cent in 2020.

The increased use of technologies has proved a key multiplier to the enhanced preparedness and capabilities of peacekeepers. As Under-Secretary-General Khare will also tell the Council, camp-security and early-warning technologies have proven effective in enabling missions that are regularly under attack to achieve greater security for their personnel. In an attack on the MINUSMA camp in the Kidal region on 25 April this year, incoming rockets and mortars were detected in advance of impact, enabling staff to take refuge in bunkers and contributing to lives saved.

The robust response of a special-forces contingent from Chad during the attack against the Aguelhok camp on 2 April clearly indicates the effect of a comprehensive approach to strengthening safety and security. Several factors contributed to this proactive response and to limiting casualties, such as enhanced predeployment training and the robust mindset of commanding officers and personnel, as well as camp reinforcements and the sound alert provided by a counter-rocket artillery-mortar system installed there. In this case, as in many others, I commend the proactive mindset of peacekeepers as they implement their mandates.

We have also made progress supporting host countries in their efforts to bring perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers to justice, including in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), MINUSMA and MONUSCO, which has led to an increase in the identification of alleged perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers and a rise in the number of investigations and convictions. Six individuals were convicted in the Central African Republic in early 2020, one in Lebanon in December 2020, and, in Mali, one was convicted, and eight were convicted and sentenced in absentia in March 2021.

Safety, security and performance are mutually reinforcing and go hand in hand. Ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers is key to enabling them to perform. Conversely, good performance from all mission components, including through a proactive and robust posture, has the potential to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. We continue to make marked progress in advancing the performance agenda, even amid the pandemic. We have developed and rolled out a remote predeployment skill-validation process to be utilized as necessary. Five remote predeployment visits were conducted in 2020, and four were conducted in 2021. We also recently restarted in-person predeployment visits, with three having been conducted thus far this year. We are strengthening in-mission performance evaluation of military components, including through the deployment of a new tool which enables evaluation in line with tasks, conditions and standards. Roll-out is planned for MINUSMA and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan this summer and to all peacekeeping operations by October.

Despite the progress made, many factors continue to impede the full safety and security of our peacekeepers on the ground. Ensuring a high level of robustness and capability for all uniformed personnel remains a challenge, and gaps in leadership, mindset and preparation continue to hamper safety and security. In addition, peacekeeping intelligence, situational awareness and early warning need to be strengthened, particularly at the operational and tactical levels. Disinformation campaigns are gaining in prominence in some theatres, putting our peacekeepers at greater risk. The impact of COVID-19 on safety, including occupational health, also continues to be a major concern.

We are seeking to address such challenges made stark by the spike in fatalities this year. The Secretariat is planning on redoubling its efforts on safety and security going forward. Through A4P plus, we commit to strengthening accountability to peacekeepers. We revised the Action Plan in February to enable us to better adapt to increasingly volatile operating environments, particularly in MINUSCA and MINUSMA. We are strengthening tactical and operational peacekeeping intelligence and situational awareness. We are further enhancing force protection, including through improving capabilities to operate at night. We are strengthening our ability to better understand the nature and source of IEDs. We are also enhancing crisis-management training for mission leadership. And we are holding a new series of CASEVAC stress tests. As part of A4P plus, we are also focusing our attention on improved strategic communications. Missions are monitoring and countering disinformation, misinformation and hate speech, including in the context of this pandemic.

To complement these efforts, coordinated actions by Member States, including members of the Security Council, in line with resolution 2518 (2020), would enable us to better address continuing gaps and shortcomings that persist in the field. First, I would like to underline the importance of deploying uniformed personnel without caveats, particularly undeclared caveats. They undermine the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and the performance of our operations.

Second, I call for Council support in providing personnel with the requisite mindset and leadership skills. In particular, we need commanding officers with significant operational experience to meet the highest United Nations standards.

Third, we also require adequate equipment, particularly armed and utility helicopters, aeromedical aviation resources, quick-reaction companies, forward medical teams, counter-IED equipment, including mine-protected vehicles, as well as jammers and aerial-intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

Fourth, we also need qualified military-intelligence personnel and military public-information personnel.

Fifth, deploying more female peacekeepers, where available, is also critical to strengthening overall mission performance.

Sixth, I also call for the Council's support to cut the flow of explosive ordinance and IED precursors to prevent the manufacture of IEDs, particularly in the Sahel region.

Seventh, political engagement with host nations and stakeholders, including for countering disinformation and hate speech, would greatly contribute to enhancing safety and security in high-risk theatres.

Eighth, political and technical support to ensure accountability for crimes against peacekeepers is also needed to pursue justice for past crimes and deter future attacks on our missions.

Ninth, strengthening trauma care and occupational health, as well as adherence to COVID-19 protocols, is also essential.

Finally, avoiding unnecessary cuts to the budgets of Headquarters and missions will help us to ensure continuity of our efforts to strengthen the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. We of course commit to being prudent and conservative in using resources, but, at the same time, we all agree that missions in these dangerous environments need adequate resources.

Annex 2**Briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support,
Atul Khare**

I want to thank the Council for giving me the opportunity to speak today about this very important topic. As is the case with the Department of Peace Operations led by Under-Secretary-General Lacroix, the security of peacekeepers around the world is a top priority for the Department of Operational Support (DOS).

DOS supports the recognition by the Security Council of the difference between safety from accidents and security from malicious acts, and that both need to be addressed to decrease the loss of life in peacekeepers. I note that within the common phrase “safety and security”, security remains the most highly emphasized and most highly resourced component, although there is a relatively higher impact of safety on lives lost and long-term injuries and illnesses.

Many Council members will be familiar with some of our key initiatives in the area of security, including trying to mitigate and respond to malicious acts. For example, the Office of Information, Communications and Technology has recently launched, in the context of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, an enterprise solution called Unite Aware, which is designed to support situational awareness in United Nations peace operations. It offers a coherent, comprehensive and integrated approach to situational awareness and information analysis for field missions.

Camp-security and early-warning technologies are readily available to peacekeeping missions on system contracts and can be deployed individually or as part of a package. These technologies include persistent surveillance systems, day- and night-observation cameras, indirect-fire detection systems, perimeter surveillance, and other specialized capabilities. For example, in early April, at the Aguelhok base operated by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, 35 projectiles, mortars and rockets were launched against the camp, and all 35 were detected. In Somalia, two separate attacks on the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) camps this March, with a total of 11 mortars, were detected. Overall, these systems help save lives by giving early warning of mortar and rocket attacks and allow personnel to take cover when time is of the essence. These systems also allow us to pinpoint the point of origin of the attack and collect information to determine where to allocate our patrol and defence resources. We are currently focusing on mobile solutions for convoy and patrol protection to extend these capabilities to the riskiest of situations.

The support to casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) continues to be a key focus for DOS. DPO and DOS have joined their efforts in an integrated multidisciplinary CASEVAC working group that facilitates information and knowledge-sharing through events and publications. In response to the report of the High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations (see S/2015/446) and the report of former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled “Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers”, we also updated the CASEVAC policy and issued it in February 2020, following stress tests conducted in high-risk missions. Our field missions are now amending local procedures. A policy and manual for the use of blood and blood products has been issued and we have also implemented health-quality and patient-safety standards in level-one plus, level-two and level-three clinics and hospitals.

In 2021, we are planning a new series of CASEVAC stress tests and the implementation of a data-based trauma system. First aid in-mission training and appropriate equipment are also essential for reducing preventable mortality. The

United Nations Buddy First Aid course and app have recently been released and a field medical assistant course is in its final stages.

We also continue to work on the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response, including by setting the criteria for the safe partial resumption of uniformed rotations, repatriations and deployments to and from United Nations peace operations. The Office of Supply Chain Management has established 13 standby air ambulance contracts, covering Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania and the Americas, centrally managed by the Air Transport Service through its Strategic Air Operations Centre in Brindisi.

We also established the medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) Mechanism, a United Nations-system-wide mechanism to ensure that our personnel, uniformed and civilian, can stay and deliver in some of the most difficult duty stations in the world. To date, 36 uniformed personnel have been successfully medevacked through the United Nations System-wide MEDEVAC Mechanism for COVID-19 from 14 troop- and police-contributing countries and across five missions. A total of 12 of those personnel were repatriated for treatment in their home country and 24 were treated in regional hubs established by the Mechanism. In addition, two Government-provided personnel were treated in regional hubs. We have also evacuated 22 civilian personnel, including contractors, international and national volunteers and United Nations Volunteers from peacekeeping missions — 26 including UNSOS — to established hubs around the world.

As you are aware, DOS recently convened a Group of Friends on COVID-19 Vaccination for Uniformed Personnel. The recommendations of the Group of Friends contained suggested principles to guide the United Nations on COVID-19 vaccinations of uniformed personnel in theatre and prior to deployment to field missions. To date, we have delivered vaccines to all the peacekeeping missions that have requested and required support — eight in total — while the others will take advantage of national programmes. Overall, DOS has delivered a total of 211,000 doses to 42 countries and we continue to prioritize peacekeeping and special political missions. We also thank the 22 troop- and police-contributing countries that have indicated their intention to vaccinate their personnel.

As you may be aware, the Contingent-Owned Equipment Manual of 2020 introduced new capabilities that would contribute to improving the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers, such as a light surgical module to support troops deployed in remote areas in cases of medical emergency and helicopter landing site kits that will enable emergency evacuation at night under limited vision conditions.

We also continuously seek the support of Member States to deploy the right capabilities and currently seek support for the deployment of armed and utility helicopters, aero-medical aviation resources, mine-protected vehicles and intelligence, and surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities.

The General Assembly has provided the Secretariat with six different ways to deploy the required capabilities in the Contingent-Owned Equipment Manual. In addition, I would like to note that the required capabilities to support the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers may also be deployed by troop- and police-contributing countries under a memorandum of understanding, a letter of assist or on a bilateral basis between Member States. Furthermore, we stand ready to work with Member States flexibly to promote triangular partnerships on training, as well as co-deployments, in order to help troop- and police contributing countries deploy units with strengthened capabilities and appropriate equipment. We will also continue to be engaged, where required, with the light coordination mechanism, focusing on information-sharing, partnership facilitation, training and capacity-building.

We have good models for the way forward already as many countries have strong industrial safety systems supported by legislation. Many Council members have extended a version to their militaries, which recognizes the unique environments uniformed members work in. We are continuing to develop a safety capability in DOS and extending support for occupational safety and health from the Secretariat, while retaining that responsibility with the contingents themselves will help us to meet our responsibility for providing our peacekeepers with reasonable safety as they go about their important work.

I look forward to collaborating with Member States and my colleagues at today's meeting to strengthen United Nations peacekeeper support by addressing both accidents and malicious acts, including through participating in the 2021 peacekeeping ministerial preparatory conference on safety and security and protection. May our partnerships enable the most effective safeguarding of peacekeepers.

Annex 3**Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Safety and Security,
Gilles Michaud**

It is my great pleasure to join this important discussion.

The United Nations is increasingly called upon to work in some of the world's most high-risk locations. Traditional and non-traditional security factors, including increasingly deadly weapons, pose serious threats to the entire United Nations family, including peacekeepers. The global security landscape is unlikely to improve in a generation, while the economic, social and political root causes of conflicts persist.

In that context, we have an urgent and collective responsibility to improve the security of United Nations personnel and operations in a multidimensional and inclusive manner. To that end, I would like to highlight three points.

First, my colleagues have already raised important points in relation to peacekeeping effectiveness and peacekeeper security as vital ends in themselves. I would add that peacekeepers are a critical partner for the broader United Nations family in keeping personnel safe and ensuring that the United Nations can operate in very insecure environments. I am certain that improving the operational safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers will better enable the United Nations to deliver on its peace, security, human rights and humanitarian mandates.

Secondly, allow me to briefly recap the safety and security frameworks and roles already in place, as that could further inform Council members' discussion on opportunities within the United Nations system.

The Department of Safety and Security (DSS), which I head, is mandated by the General Assembly to direct and lead the United Nations security management system (UNSMS). This system comprises more than 50 United Nations and non-United Nations entities. My Department has representatives working on the security of more than 180,000 United Nations personnel and their dependents across the globe, including in mission and non-mission settings.

Turning specifically to United Nations peace operations, UNSMS does not cover United Nations troops deployed in military contingents, neither does it cover those deployed in formed police units. Peacekeepers that are included under the purview of DSS include United Nations civilian personnel in missions and individually deployed military and police personnel working in peace operations.

UNSMS has put in place security management policy guidance and operational support to enable the United Nations to stay and deliver programmes in high-risk areas. It provides security threat and risk analysis and increases security awareness for UNSMS leaders and personnel through training programmes. As such, the UNSMS has a robust, tried-and-tested system in place to support the security of civilian and individually deployed military and police personnel in peace operations.

Of course, there is always room to improve. My strategic vision is to develop a more agile and diverse security workforce. We need to embed a people- and community-centred approach to security risk management and ensure that our workforce can apply an approach based not just on physical security measures but also on forward-looking threat and risk analysis, data-based security management, access negotiation, engagement with non-State armed actors and acceptance by the communities we serve, among others.

Thirdly, dialogue and collaboration among Secretariat departments and with Member States is key to strengthening the safety and security of peacekeepers. Mechanisms are already in place for coordination among Secretariat departments on

security policy and operational issues. For example, DSS has worked hand in hand with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA)-Department of Peace Operations (DPO) focal points on developing mission policies, such as guidance on improvised explosive devices. Our collective aim is to ensure that DPPA and DPO policies are coherent with UNSMS policies. Existing crisis-management mechanisms in the field and at United Nations Headquarters allow for daily coordination.

The United Nations relies on coordination with Member States and a primary role of United Nations security advisers in field duty stations is to work closely with host Government authorities on security issues. Further coordination across the intergovernmental processes on the safety and security of United Nations personnel will contribute to improving the security of peacekeepers and the security of mandated United Nations operations overall.

Of course, security involves resources and cannot be an afterthought. To truly improve the security of United Nations peacekeepers, with all the associated implications for broader United Nations delivery, security considerations and associated resources must be integral to deliberations on United Nations mandates and in the design and planning of missions.

In closing, DSS is fully committed to supporting efforts to further enhance the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. My department has a wealth of expertise on security matters relevant to United Nations programme delivery. We stand ready to provide technical support and to engage with all stakeholders on issues under my purview.

I thank Council members for the opportunity to contribute to this important discussion. They can be assured of my support and attention.

Annex 4**Statement by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Zhang Jun**

[Original: Chinese]

I thank Under-Secretaries-General Lacroix, Khare and Michaud for their briefings. I thank the relevant departments of the Secretariat for their efforts in protecting the safety and security of peacekeepers. I welcome the presence of Brazil at today's meeting on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers.

United Nations peacekeeping operations represent an important means for the maintenance of international peace and security. Peacekeepers are an important asset to international peace. Over more than 70 years, more than 4,000 peacekeepers have died in the line of duty. This year, 50 peacekeepers have laid down their precious lives. While peacekeeping operations cannot be absolutely zero risk, we should try our best to minimize security risk.

I would like to make four points.

First, we should step up implementation and continue to improve the integrated security capacity of peacekeepers. In recent years, the United Nations has continued to increase the importance given to the safety and security of peacekeepers — the Security Council adopted resolution 2518 (2020) last year; the report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/75/19) devoted a special section to that issue; and the Secretariat formulated the Action Plan to Improve the Security of Peacekeepers. It is necessary to increase the related input and ensure that the relevant considerations are reflected in the implementation. We should continue to scale up risk assessment in the light of the actual situation of each mission, incorporate it into all aspects of decision-making and take effective measures.

It is necessary to improve the quality of the equipment of peacekeeping missions in a targeted manner; improve the quality of peacekeeping personnel; strengthen the situational awareness, emergency response and emergency rescue capabilities of peacekeeping operations; and increase the resilience of peacekeeping operations to various security risks.

Secondly, we should concentrate optimal resources on resolving the key and difficult issues facing peacekeepers in safety and security. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is a new challenge to safety and security. China calls for the vaccination of all peacekeepers to be completed as soon as possible. Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have again become a major cause of casualties among peacekeepers this year. China expects the Secretariat to submit an independent strategic assessment report on peacekeeping operations' response to the threat of IEDs.

The development and use of new technologies are changing rapidly and peacekeeping operations should not be left behind. It is imperative to enhance communication and coordination among the United Nations, the troop- and police-contributing countries and the countries concerned and, on the basis of full respect for the sovereignty of the countries concerned, to actively study how to use new technologies to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Thirdly, we should strengthen partnerships and create favourable conditions for improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. That is a matter which requires the joint efforts of all stakeholders. The Security Council should formulate realistic, clear and operable mandates for peacekeeping operations and avoid needless sacrifice

due to inappropriate mandates. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly should provide sufficient resources to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. China calls on all Member States to pay their peacekeeping assessments on time and in full. All efforts should be made to investigate attacks against peacekeepers and bring the perpetrators to justice. Status-of-forces agreements should be complied with and the Secretariat, peacekeeping organizations and host countries should strengthen communication to properly resolve related issues.

Fourthly, we should keep abreast of the times and continue to identify and address new challenges to the safety and security of peacekeepers. While the world is changing, so are the risks faced by peacekeepers. We should keep up with developments; stay ahead of risks as much as possible; incorporate safety precautions into all aspects of decision-making, training, equipment and management; and reduce casualties among peacekeepers through preventive action.

For more than 30 years, while actively participating in peacekeeping operations, China has attached great importance to the safety and security of peacekeepers. We promoted the adoption of resolution 2518 (2020), the first Security Council resolution on the safety and security of peacekeepers, as well as its follow-up. We provided financial support to the Secretariat for formulating the Action Plan. We also established with other Member States, including Brazil, Indonesia and Rwanda, the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, in a bid to enhance communication and information-sharing, promote policy coordination and improve capacity-building. We also actively provided other troop and police-contributing countries with security training, funded the Secretariat's workshop on safety and security issues and decided to donate 300,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to peacekeepers.

China stands ready to continue to work with other Council members and the international community in contributing to the protection of our Blue Helmets.

Annex 5**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I would like to thank Under-Secretaries-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Atul Khare and Gilles Michaud for their very insightful briefings.

The safety and security of peacekeepers are an integral benchmark of the ability of United Nations peacekeeping to adapt to the ever-changing circumstances of where and how it operates. Three years ago, the establishment of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations provided a clear, cohesive approach to tackling the interconnected priorities of United Nations peacekeeping and ensuring that it is able to reform and adjust to the needs and challenges that it is facing.

Estonia will now continue to support the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative and place high importance on its goals of improving the performance and accountability of peacekeeping, promoting the women and peace and security agenda and addressing capability and integration gaps. All those priorities in turn affect the safety and security of peacekeepers as they implement their core mandates of protecting civilians and advancing political solutions.

Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers involves a multitude of factors. It includes ensuring that equipment and training meet the requisite standards and are appropriate for the circumstances of the particular area of operation; utilizing new technologies, including unmanned aerial vehicles, together with appropriate training to increase the capabilities of peacekeepers; and addressing greater attention to status-of-forces agreement violations, which can constitute a serious risk to the safety of peacekeepers and mandate implementation. Meanwhile, the coronavirus disease pandemic has introduced new medical risks and entrenched illnesses as the largest contributor to peacekeeper casualties.

Violence against peacekeepers remains a grave issue that must be better investigated and prosecuted. More can also be done to prevent it. Regrettably, the deliberate targeting of United Nations peacekeepers has increasingly become an approach for those not interested in peace — the spoilers who profit from instability. However, that makes the job of peacekeepers so much more important because for millions of people around the world our Blue Helmets represent the best hope for peace and stability. Estonia condemns in the strongest terms the targeting and killing of United Nations peacekeepers and emphasizes that the perpetrators and instigators of such violence must be brought to justice.

I would like to conclude by expressing our gratitude and strong support to all United Nations peacekeepers, women and men, whose dedication and sacrifice bring hope to millions and help countries to navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. I will finish by honouring the service of those United Nations peacekeepers who paid the ultimate price in that endeavour.

Annex 6**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nathalie Broadhurst Estival**

[Original: French]

I would like to thank Atul Khare, Jean-Pierre Lacroix and Gilles Michaud for their briefings.

France pays tribute to the peacekeepers who died or who were injured in the course of their work. I would like to emphasize three points.

First, the main priorities of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative focus on the safety and security of the Blue Helmets.

France is convinced that effective, mobile and robust operations, conducted with determination, deter attacks and limit the freedom of action of hostile groups. That is also a prerequisite for effectively fulfilling mandates, particularly in terms of civilian protection. That is, for example, the purpose of reconfiguring the Intervention Brigade within the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which must continue.

The security of peacekeepers also depends on their greater awareness of the situation on the ground thanks to the peacekeeping intelligence policy and the use of technological resources. It also depends on the ability to build trust with the population. In that regard, language skills are crucial.

Lastly, the host State has a particular responsibility for the security of peacekeepers. Compliance with status-of-forces agreements (SOFAs) is key. In that regard, I would like to underscore France's concern about SOFA violations, which have increased in number in the Central African Republic in recent months. Those actions are unacceptable, and we call on the authorities of the Central African Republic to do their utmost to ensure the safety of United Nations personnel deployed to assist the Central African people. It is also crucial to prevent crimes against peacekeepers. In that regard, the Security Council must increase the penalties against those responsible. The United Nations must support national investigations and, more generally, efforts to combat impunity for such crimes.

France is actively involved in improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. That support includes operational cooperation between the French forces and peacekeeping operations. That is particularly the case between Operation Barkhane and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, as well as with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic. The shows of force by the French forces are a good illustration of that, as was the case during the attack on the Aguelhok camp in Mali on 2 April, when the overflight of a French aircraft helped to repel the attackers.

France also contributes to the training of peacekeepers, both before and during their deployment. We are striving to meet the capability needs, in particular so as to fill the gaps identified in the context of the light coordination mechanism.

Lastly, I would like to mention boosting security in camps by implementing high-tech systems, in particular to detect indirect fire and warn United Nations personnel.

Finally, and this is my last point, the recent increase in the number of victims, which is not acceptable, should not cause us to lose sight of the collective efforts that have led to a decrease in the number of victims over recent years.

To that end, the independent strategic review of United Nations peacekeeping operations' responses to improvised explosive devices, which is provided for in the presidential statement (S/2021/11) to be adopted today, offers an opportunity to renew those efforts.

Annex 7**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations, Nagaraj Naidu Kakanur**

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, and your delegation for organizing this important debate on an issue of priority for my delegation and for other troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs). Later this week, on 29 May, we will observe the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. This open debate is therefore very timely. I also thank Under-Secretary-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General Atul Khare and Under-Secretary-General Gilles Michaud for their valuable briefings.

India joins other delegations in paying tribute to the men and women who have served and continue to serve in peacekeeping operations for their professionalism, dedication and courage. We remember the 4,089 peacekeepers who lost their lives and the valour and bravery of India's 175 peacekeepers who laid down their lives across various missions. India is proud of its long and rich tradition of contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations. We have contributed more than 250,000 troops in 49 missions over the years, cumulatively the largest from any country. Even as we speak today, an Indian peacekeeping brigade stationed in Goma, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is saving the lives of civilians stranded in the aftermath of the Mount Nyiragongo eruption in the country.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has posed severe challenges to peacekeeping missions and peacekeepers. We are pleased to note that peacekeeping missions are putting in place a series of mitigation measures to promote the safety, security and health of all United Nations personnel, while maintaining the continuity of operations. To that end, during the pandemic India readily answered the Secretary-General's call by upgrading its hospitals in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). We also delivered 200,000 doses of Made in India COVID-19 vaccines for vaccinating all uniformed personnel deployed in various field missions and are pleased to note that almost 140,000 field personnel have already been vaccinated, using the same.

Peacekeeping is not a strategy in itself but rather a strategic tool. I take this opportunity to recall the cardinal principles of peacekeeping: consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence and in defence of the mandate. Those principles continue to be as relevant as ever.

United Nations peacekeepers operate in a complex security environment involving armed groups, non-State actors and terrorists. The ever-expanding mandates of peacekeeping missions with limited resources have only added to the challenges and complexities that peacekeepers face on the ground. The strategy of peacekeepers needing to do more with less is setting us all up for a potential crisis. The fallout of such a strategy is glaringly evident in the increasing casualties over the years.

Such challenges are further compounded by the increasing use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) by terrorists and armed groups against peacekeepers. The Blue Helmets, who are currently operating in 13 peacekeeping missions, are under tremendous pressure. More than 260 peacekeepers have died due to malicious attacks since 2013. It is evident that protecting the protectors should be our primary objective.

In that context, I would like to make the following suggestions for the Security Council's consideration.

First, the tendency to burden peacekeepers with responsibilities that ought to primarily lie with the host State or other relevant international organizations should stop. The Security Council needs to authorize carefully thought-out mandates for peacekeepers in close consultation with troop-contributing countries, since the protection of peacekeepers is as important as the protection of civilians. Peacekeeping missions cannot be a long-term response to what are fundamentally political problems. It is for the Council to address such issues rather than burden peacekeeping missions beyond their mandate.

Second, while a number of initiatives have been taken to incorporate IED disposal standards in the field, we are of the view that this issue needs more attention. Missions facing IED threats should have dedicated resources to counter that particular threat. The training of United Nations personnel on IED threats, both in-country and prior to deployment, needs to be more context specific. Advance patrol parties in affected areas, along with the involvement of the relevant host State security authorities, should become the norm.

Third, there should also be concerted efforts to upgrade the security infrastructure of the camps of United Nations peacekeepers, as a number of casualties have been related to direct attacks on security camps. Timely and reliable medical evacuation and casualty evacuation, including the use of helicopters with night flight capability and night retrieval operations, are essential. Force Commanders should be given the direct authority for commanding such air assets in order to respond in a timely manner to crisis situations and accidents.

Fourth, peacekeepers need to be provided full access to medical facilities, in accordance with the golden hour principle, throughout the mission area. Medical capabilities in all missions need to be reviewed to identify the gaps that currently exist. India has also pledged a helicopter unit for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. We have also upgraded our medical facilities at MONUSCO, Goma, and UNMISS, Juba.

Fifth, we believe that the infusion of appropriate technology can play a significant role in improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. The use of field-focused, reliable and cost-effective new technologies in peacekeeping operations that are driven by the practical needs of the end users on the ground is the need of the hour. In that regard, I am happy to inform the Council that India, in partnership with the Department of Operational Support, has been working towards the development of the mobile technological platform Unite Aware, which helps to increase situational awareness and provides terrain-related information to peacekeepers. We have contributed \$1.64 million towards that project, and we hope to launch it under our August presidency later this year.

Sixth, our peacekeepers are deployed in increasingly complex and often hostile environments. Training is an essential and strategic investment in peacekeeping and is a shared responsibility between Member States and the Secretariat. India's Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping, set up in 2000, has a rich tradition of not only imparting predeployment training but also developing curricula for emerging TCCs and delivering targeted training modules, including for women peacekeepers. India's Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping is looking forward to signing a memorandum of understanding and partnering with the United Nations C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations to prepare training modules on a range of capabilities.

Seventh, India appreciates the Secretary-General's call for Action for Peacekeeping, under which close attention is given to improving the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping personnel. We also welcome the launch of the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative, which has further strengthened our

commitment to safety and security, as well as accountability for crimes against peacekeepers. We also support the work of the Implementation Support Team for Fatalities and the Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers.

Besides taking preventive measures to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, it is also imperative to bring the perpetrators who have committed heinous crimes against them to justice. That requires collaboration and coordination between the different stakeholders, including the United Nations and the host countries where the peacekeepers are deployed, and extending assistance to countries that need help to frame such legislation.

In conclusion, the issue of the safety and security of peacekeepers requires a comprehensive approach and concerted efforts by all stakeholders involved. We need to look at the issue both holistically and in a sustained manner. In keeping with its time-tested credentials and commitment to United Nations peacekeeping, India would never be found wanting in that regard.

Annex 8**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geraldine Byrne Nason**

I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this open debate on such an important topic. I would also like to thank the briefers for their valuable interventions.

Like China, my country has a long and proud tradition of peacekeeping. For Ireland, and for any troop-contributing country, I imagine, keeping the women and men whom we deploy as peacekeepers safe is always to the forefront of our minds.

The topic of today's debate is not abstract for Ireland. It is personal. Today we remember those who gave their lives in the cause of peace and the loved ones whom they left behind. We should spare no effort in bringing those responsible for attacks on peacekeepers to justice.

As the ones who decide to send our peacekeepers into the most difficult contexts, we all have a responsibility to look at how we contribute, collectively and individually, to the safety and security of those women and men.

The threats faced by peacekeepers are wide-ranging, from the increasingly complex nature of conflict to improvised explosive devices, drone technology, and most recently the coronavirus disease. As these threats evolve, so too must our responses. For an issue as critical as this, we believe that a concerted, whole-United Nations approach is necessary.

Under China's presidency last March, the Security Council adopted resolution 2518 (2020). We have achieved progress in implementing its provisions already and we encourage everyone to redouble their efforts. We believe that the new Group of Friends on Safety and Security, which we were delighted to join, can play an important role in supporting this and I am particularly pleased to welcome with us this morning the Ambassador of Brazil, who co-chairs that Group.

The recently adopted report of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (A/75/19) makes a range of recommendations, including on the need for increased predeployment training, gender-sensitive working environments, improved intelligence and situational awareness, enhanced cooperation and the use of new technology. What is needed now is implementation.

The Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative also gives us a framework to create stronger and safer peacekeeping operations. At its heart, that initiative is about political will and showing leadership. Its success relies on all of us stepping up collectively in support of our troops. Today's debate, along with the presidential statement (S/PRST/2021/11) we have just adopted, will serve as an important step on that path.

It is our firm belief that our peacekeepers are safer — and our missions more effective — when high-quality training and capacity-building are consistently delivered. Put simply, you cannot have one without the other.

Tools such as the light coordination mechanism, which Ireland actively supports, are invaluable when it comes to matching needs on the ground with resources.

But as a long-standing troop-contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, Ireland has also seen the importance of training for the development of safer and more effective missions.

That is why we have invested heavily in sharing our more than 60 years of experience on the ground as peacekeepers in order to help to build on-the-ground

capacity among other troop-contributing countries, such as through the provision of predeployment training and field training, in particular on countering improvised explosive devices. We have also supported initiatives such as the United Nations Buddy First Aid Training and the United Nations Police Training Architecture Programme.

Non-State actors are becoming ever more innovative in their use of emerging technology. We need to be equally innovative in how we face such threats. Sharing information is critical, as is understanding how the accessibility of information and technology is exploited.

It is also vital to ensure that our peacekeepers work to enhance their understanding of their respective operating environments. The comprehensive peacekeeping intelligence policy and related doctrine, including the *Military Peacekeeping-Intelligence Handbook*, will improve situational awareness in missions, leading to better decision-making for the protection of our United Nations personnel and civilians. Again, we keep coming back to the fact that what matters here is effective implementation.

We know that increased participation of women has a positive impact across all pillars of peacekeeping. Safety and security are certainly no exception.

Let us be clear: increased and meaningful female participation benefits not just the mission itself but also those we seek to protect. Ireland, along with fellow Action for Peacekeeping Women, Peace and Security Champions, recently initiated a series of events focused on overcoming barriers to women's participation in peacekeeping. We look forward to presenting the outcome and recommendations of that work very shortly.

Finally, I want to underline the importance of maintaining a strong focus on safety and security throughout the mission cycle — from inception to transition. Transitions, we know, can be a time of heightened risks for missions and those they seek to protect. Ensuring properly planned, coordinated and managed transitions can help mitigate those risks. That is a priority for Ireland as a member of the Council — to look at how we manage those critical periods of change to ensure the most effective and sustainable path to peace.

Millions of the most vulnerable people rely on our peacekeepers for protection, but those peacekeepers are not invincible: they rely on their host nation, their troop-contributing countries and especially on the Council to ensure that they have the means and the support to do what they do every day.

They are putting their lives on the line in our collective pursuit of peace. We owe it to them — and to all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice — to do our utmost to ensure their safety.

Annex 9**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations, Martin Kimani**

I thank you, Sir, for convening this important debate. I also thank Mr. Lacroix, Mr. Khare and Mr. Michaud for their briefings. I also thank the representative of Brazil, speaking on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers.

As a troop- and police-contributing country for close to five decades, Kenya attaches great importance to peacekeeping and the role it plays in the maintenance of international peace and security. Conscious of the increasingly serious threats to peacekeepers in the peacekeeping environment, we consider their safety and security an utmost priority.

Reflecting that concern, Kenya organized an Arria Formula meeting in March, which was co-hosted by many Security Council members, on the threats posed by improvised explosive devices. We continue to recommend that the ideas that emerged from that useful discussion be reflected in the practicalities of peacekeeping and how mandates and their leadership are crafted.

Kenya commends other recent complementary initiatives, including the launch by China and co-founders of the Group of Friends on Safety and Security of Peacekeepers.

We also note that significant efforts have already gone into improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. In particular, we appreciate the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative and resolution 2518 (2020), which was unanimously adopted by the Security Council in March 2020.

There is consensus that the elements necessary for the safety and security of peacekeepers should include clear and realistic mandates; adequate, quality training of peacekeepers; situational awareness; universal and quality medical support; respect for status-of-force agreements; and gaining and maintaining the trust of host communities.

Let me highlight six points that are necessary for the actualization of those elements. The protection of peacekeepers is a collective effort. Each key stakeholder must diligently perform its respective and complimentary roles: the Security Council must put in place clear mandates that are informed by the prevailing situation on the ground; the Secretariat should coordinate the implementation of Council decisions, as well as operational and logistical support; troop- and police-contributing countries must ensure that their personnel are competent for the task ahead and also conversant with safety imperatives; partners should meet their commitments for timely and sustainable financial support; and host countries have the duty to facilitate the operations of the peacekeeping mission, including through public sensitization and investigations into any attacks on peacekeepers.

The safety and security of peacekeepers should be a long-term commitment, with clear benchmarks and targets that are realistic, measurable and achievable. The implementation of the Secretary-General's Action for Peace Plus initiative is a positive step in that direction.

There is a need for the United Nations to continue exploiting existing triangular partnership programmes so that all troop- and police-contributing countries can have access to quality training. Kenya's International Peace Support Training Centre remains available for that purpose.

Relevant modern technology and equipment should be provided for improved situational awareness, as traditional intelligence mechanisms are no longer adequate.

Preparedness, proper management of communicable diseases and other safety-related issues must be part of the medical strategy for peacekeeping missions. Therefore, responsive medical support that utilizes high mobility and better-equipped field facilities, including medical evacuation, should be prioritized.

It is important to constructively engage host countries on the importance of meeting their obligations under status-of-forces agreements, especially in relation to the safety of peacekeepers.

The breach of status-of-forces agreements is sometimes signalled politically before it happens and can lead to direct harm to peacekeepers. It is therefore critical that the Security Council be made aware of any negative and deliberate propaganda by political actors that may compromise the safety and security of peacekeepers. The Council should respond to such actions in clear and pre-emptive terms if necessary. The safety and security of peacekeepers should always be understood as a Council priority that triggers a strong reaction if compromised.

I reaffirm Kenya's commitment to the safety and security of peacekeepers and our readiness to work with all States Members of the United Nations in advancing that agenda.

In conclusion, I want to highlight the achievement of Military Gender Advisor Major Steplyne Nyaboga, who recently completed her peacekeeping assignment in Darfur. She has been awarded the 2020 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award.

Kenya is proud of her achievement, which highlights the quality and dedication of our peacekeepers, and of the gender-sensitive outreach in which she excelled. Her recognition is indicative of the journey that Kenya is committed to making to reach gender equity and equality. We thank her Commanders and the Secretary-General for that recognition.

Annex 10**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, Juan Ramón de la Fuente Ramírez**

[Original: Spanish]

We thank China for convoking this timely debate and Under-Secretaries-General Lacroix, Khare and Michaud for their briefings.

My delegation subscribes to the statement to be delivered by the representative of Brazil on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, in which Mexico actively participates.

While Mexico recognizes the efforts of the Secretariat to improve the protection and security of peacekeeping personnel, we regret the attacks against them to date this year and join others in paying tribute to those lost in the line of duty. We condemn all attacks against peacekeepers and those providing medical assistance. It is unacceptable for the perpetrators of such attacks to go unpunished.

Resolution 2518 (2020) and the presidential statement adopted today (S/PRST/2021/11) are important tools for tackling threats affecting peacekeeping mission personnel. However, they must be implemented fully and not remain mere empty words.

Although the number of incidents decreased from 50 to 14 between 2017 and 2020, by the end of April 2021 there had already been 14 casualties due to violent attacks against peacekeepers, equal to the total number of deaths from such attacks in 2020. In accordance with international humanitarian law, peacekeeping forces must be protected.

It is important to note that the number of casualties due to occupational safety and health reasons exceeds the number of lives lost to violent attacks. Indeed, 104 people died from work-related accidents and illnesses in 2020. Those figures are troubling and must be recognized in order to advocate strengthened preventive measures to reduce such incidents and improve the occupational safety and health conditions of peacekeepers. In that regard, we recognize the efforts of the United Nations and other international actors to ensure that peacekeepers, whether already on the ground or about to be deployed, have access to coronavirus-disease vaccines.

In order to operate in an agile and effective manner, peace operations must be equipped with adequate resources, capacities and systems. That includes standards for deployment, training, equipment, medical support, new technologies and responsive coordination between missions and the countries where operations are deployed.

All peacekeeping settings must guarantee safe and gender-sensitive work environments and any threats or acts of violence against female staff, whose contribution has been essential to maintaining the peace and improving efficiency of operations, must be dealt with robustly.

All those issues must be taken into account when the Council reviews and adjusts the mandates of peace operations. It is also important to incorporate the necessary inputs and hear the points of view of those on the ground. The review carried out by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, in which troop- and personnel-contributing countries participated, should be made full use of since it provided relevant information on the main challenges in ensuring the safety and security of personnel.

Mexico reiterates its support for the commitments made through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, including prioritizing collective action to improve security and protection.

The forthcoming United Nations ministerial conference on peacekeeping to be held in the Republic of Korea will also provide an opportunity to share good practices for improving the security and protection of peacekeepers.

It is important that the Security Council continue adopting concrete measures in that area to enhance the effectiveness of mandates and ensure, as far as possible, that peacekeeping operations fulfil their mandates without compromising the well-being and security of their personnel.

Annex 11

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry

[Original: French]

In June 2020, China proposed resolution 2518 (2020) on the safety and security of peacekeepers, which was unanimously adopted. Last month, China organized a meeting of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, at which the issue was discussed in depth. China is now bringing it back to the table to ensure that it remains consistent in its approach. I would like to thank China for its efforts to strengthen the security and safety of peacekeepers.

I would also like to thank Under-Secretaries-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Atul Khare and Gilles Michaud for their excellent briefings on the subject.

I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Brazil to today's debate.

The Niger welcomes all efforts by the Secretariat, in particular through the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which prioritizes the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, for its part, made relevant recommendations in its report (A/75/19) on measures to strengthen the security of peacekeepers.

For the Niger, which has recorded many casualties and injuries in the ranks of the contingents it has deployed to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali since its founding, the importance of today's debate is no longer in question. The attack in Aguelhok, in which four peacekeepers were killed and some 30 wounded, again reminds us of the need to protect peacekeepers in the face of the perils of contemporary areas of operation, especially in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic, which poses an additional threat to the safety and security of the Blue Helmets.

That approach is the shared responsibility of the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries and all peacekeeping partners. It is implemented by strengthening measures to address the factors that affect the safety and security of peacekeepers. Such measures include:

Implementing the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council, such as resolution 2518 (2020);

Improved training and its continuous adaptation to the situation on the ground. Although training is considered to be the responsibility of troop-contributing countries, it is important to send teams to those countries to verify how contingents are trained and ensure that training modules are taught in line with United Nations standards so as to bridge any gaps;

Strengthening the medical and hygiene conditions for peacekeepers to improve their performance and the outcome of operations;

Strengthening triangular cooperation to facilitate the provision of equipment for troop-contributing countries with few opportunities in that area;

Updating equipment, including the use of new technologies and their adaptation to the situation on the ground;

Improving performance evaluation tools by ensuring that corrective measures are regularly taken, following assessments;

Enhancing relations between missions and host countries by strengthening consultation and coordination frameworks;

Developing effective partnerships with other regional and subregional organizations in the area of safety and security of peacekeeping personnel;

Ongoing active cooperation with local communities to ensure protection against the pandemic, while also benefiting from their support and collaboration;

Ensuring that all appropriate measures are taken to bring to justice those responsible for criminal acts against personnel serving in peace operations. Such crimes should not be covered by a statute of limitations or pardon.

In conclusion, I would like to underscore that in order to be successful, peace operations — the most visible United Nations tool for the maintenance of international peace and security — need the support of all actors involved, including support for their rules of engagement. That includes improving the welfare and combat readiness of peacekeepers, in particular in the light of new contemporary challenges in conflict areas, such as terrorism and the use of improvised explosive devices and new technologies by non-State groups.

Annex 12**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations, Mona Juul**

I thank the briefers, as well as China, for adding this important debate to our agenda. We see it in connection with other events, including the Arria Formula meeting on improvised explosive devices, organized by Kenya in March.

The safety and security of peacekeepers has been a key concern for Norway since our first United Nations deployments. On 13 July 1948 in Jerusalem, our countryman Ole Helge Bakke became the first peacekeeper to lose his life while on United Nations duty. Since then, almost 4,100 women and men have died while serving as United Nations peacekeepers. Earlier this month, the Secretary-General held his annual memorial service for 2020. The names of 336 lost United Nations colleagues were read out, including the names of 130 peacekeepers. Just reading their names lasted almost half an hour.

We also recall the countless others who have suffered severe physical or mental scars after having served with the United Nations. Those keepers of peace — and their families — have made enormous sacrifices on our behalf, and for that we thank them profoundly.

The least we can do to honour their bravery is to keep looking for solutions to prevent accidents and illness, not least to reduce the threat of malicious acts. In that regard, we would like to highlight three points — training, technology and accountability.

First, adequate training is essential to ensure that peacekeepers are prepared to deal with the complex operational situations that they will face in the field. That training must be as context-specific as possible. Norway urges fellow troop- and police-contributing countries to train and deploy personnel with the capabilities set forth in the Peacekeeping-Intelligence Policy. That will help protect our peacekeepers and also enhance their capacity to handle what is the main priority of most missions — the protection of civilians.

Secondly, the United Nations must optimize the use of technology and equipment to maximize the safety and security of its personnel. That includes enhancing situational awareness and analysis. Optimizing the use of technology should also include the transition to renewable energy, whenever feasible. That will reduce missions' fuel requirements and the frequency of long-distance fuel convoys, which are vulnerable to attacks and prone to accidents. Transitioning to renewable energy can also create socioeconomic dividends, which may lessen the animosity towards peacekeepers that exists in some host communities. That in turn could have a positive impact on the implementation of a mission's mandate.

Thirdly, host States must take seriously their obligation to bring to justice those who attack peacekeepers. The United Nations, however, must also play its part to assist in that endeavour. Norway is pleased to provide targeted capacity-building support to the Malian authorities in their fight against impunity. We do so through our specialized police team in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which also includes French improvised explosive device experts.

Norway is heartened by the engagement of fellow Member States — as well as the United Nations Secretariat — in enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers, including substantive efforts to deal with the coronavirus disease. We trust that ongoing engagement will result in concrete proposals to make good on our joint commitment to ensure their well-being.

We owe it to all those whom we have lost and all those who will bear the scars of their service to the United Nations for the rest of their lives. We also owe it to the host communities, because safe and secure peacekeepers are better peacekeepers.

Annex 13**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vassily Nebenzia**

[Original: Russian]

At the outset, let me stress again that, with the General Assembly convening in-person meetings and coronavirus disease-related restrictive measures in New York being gradually lifted, our return to the Security Council chamber becomes imperative. We call upon the Chinese presidency to take all necessary steps to that end.

We thank you, Sir, for convening a discussion on such an important and relevant issue as the safety and security of the Blue Helmets. We also thank Under-Secretaries-General Lacroix, Khare and Michaud for their briefings and welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Brazil.

Nowadays, peacekeeping operations are deployed in complicated conditions, which are often very dangerous and aggravated by a dire humanitarian and socioeconomic environment. It is not seldom that the Blue Helmets are subject to asymmetric threats. The coronavirus pandemic posed another unexpected yet very serious challenge. The pandemic negatively impacted both the effectiveness of peacekeeping efforts and the safety of peacekeepers.

Against that backdrop, proper planning and organization of the work of peacekeeping missions, awareness of the surrounding situations and possible threats are factors of paramount importance for the safety and security of peacekeepers. Therefore, measures related to peacekeeping intelligence must be carried out in strict compliance with the parameters agreed upon by Member States.

Another pivotal factor is quality training for Blue Helmets prior to their deployment, as well as adequate material and technical support. By all means, the host State that receives the mission on its territory bears key responsibility in that regard. It depends on the host country authorities as to whether all necessary measures are taken in order to hold to account those who commit acts of violence against United Nations personnel. Amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, it is even more important to maintain the proper level of medical aid delivery in the field.

All of those issues require unwavering attention, constant improvement and, wherever necessary, changes of approach. That is why the question of the safety and security of peacekeepers always remains a focus of the Security Council, its Working Group on Peacekeeping Operations, the General Assembly's Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and field missions. Of course, those issues are absolute priorities for troop- and police-contributing countries.

Thanks to coordinated efforts and consultations in those formats, as well as the close interaction between Member States and the United Nations Secretariat, the number of injuries and casualties among the Blue Helmets has dropped significantly in recent years.

Russia is represented in all the formats I mentioned above. We consistently contribute to promoting the safety and security of peacekeepers. We will continue training peacekeepers from different countries in specialized Russian facilities. It was therefore only natural for us to support the presidential statement (S/PRST/2021/11) drafted by the Chinese delegation and join the newly created Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers. We are convinced that the discussions of that informal Group will enrich and add value to the experience and expertise already accumulated in that area.

In conclusion, let me express our sincere appreciation to those who are deployed on the front lines of peacekeeping efforts, namely the Blue Helmets and all United Nations peacekeeping personnel, who implement the noblest of all mandates: to maintain peace.

The recent volcano eruption in Goma, Democratic Republic of the Congo, is one example of the unexpected challenges that populations and peacekeepers may be faced with. Goma-based Blue Helmets from India and other States, as well as other specialists present in the region on a contractual basis, including Russian pilots, continue to provide assistance to civilians in those extremely precarious conditions

Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, Anna Evstigneeva

[Original: Russian]

I thank you, Sir, for giving us the floor again. I had to request to take the floor in order to respond to the statement by the representative of the United States regarding the situation in the Central African Republic.

Russian instructors are present in the Central African Republic because the Government of the country invited them to train and support the national army, police and gendarmerie. All necessary contact is maintained with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and other bilateral partners, first and foremost with the leadership of the Central African Republic.

We believe that the question of improving coordination should be solved on the ground by strengthening the relevant mechanisms. We are convinced that the restoration of peace and security in the Central African Republic, through the joint efforts of all stakeholders, is the most important task. Once that is achieved, it can both ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers and the civilian population and allow for the timely withdrawal of the peacekeeping mission from the country.

Annex 14**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Ms. Halimah DeShong**

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes today's discussion on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. We thank the briefers for their insightful remarks.

Peace operations remain one of the most effective tools in our collective quest for peace and security. Yet, amid a plethora of emerging and contemporary risk factors — such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the hazards of climate change and the asymmetric threats posed by armed groups and terrorists — peace operations have become increasingly complex.

Peacekeeping personnel are tasked with carrying out their mandates in increasingly harsh political, security and environmental conditions. In far too many contexts, they have paid the ultimate price in the noble pursuit of protecting others. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines pays tribute to all uniformed personnel for their commitments and sacrifices. We also condemn in the strongest terms all acts of violence perpetrated against peacekeepers and encourage host states to promptly investigate and prosecute those responsible for such attacks.

The immense expectations placed on all mission personnel, both uniformed and civilian, to deliver peace and security in the most volatile of circumstances demand the full support and cooperation of the international community. Consistent political engagement among the Secretariat, the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries (TCCs/PCCs), and host countries is essential to ensure effective mission performance and guarantee the safety and security of mission personnel.

We must also ensure that peace operations are provided with the adequate human, technical and financial resources, as well as clear, focused and actionable mandates. Peacekeeping personnel should be provided with the necessary training and support at all stages of peacekeeping — from predeployment to post-deployment — accompanied by adequate incentive structures to reward high performance, as well as remedial mechanisms to address performance gaps.

The health and well-being of peacekeepers must also be treated as a critical priority, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. To that end, all peacekeepers should be provided with safe and efficacious vaccines as a means of protecting them and the host communities to which they are deployed.

Professional development opportunities in areas such as language training and cultural enrichment will enable peacekeepers to overcome the communication barriers that they face when deployed and strengthen their engagement with local communities. Improving community engagement is an essential means of keeping peacekeepers safe in the field.

The issue of sexual exploitation and abuse is one that demands urgent attention. We firmly condemn such violations and reaffirm our support for the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse. Swift and impartial investigations must be conducted whenever those incidents occur. It is also crucial that TCCs/PCCs be consulted immediately whenever there are allegations against their deployed personnel in order to ensure that corrective measures are taken without delay.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the thrust to streamline peacekeeping under the Secretary-General's ongoing Action for Peacekeeping initiative. That initiative brings collective political action to the forefront of our efforts

to maintain international peace and security, which is of paramount importance in successfully preventing and resolving conflicts and bolstering peacekeeper safety and security.

Our delegation also commends the ongoing efforts to include more women in peace operations in all capacities, both uniformed and civilian, and at all levels from front-line duty to senior leadership. Women are important agents and facilitators of peace in all contexts, and we strongly encourage their increased participation and engagement in all facets of peacekeeping. We take this opportunity to congratulate Kenyan peacekeeper Ms. Steplyne Nyaboga, who served as Military Gender Adviser to the recently ended African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, on receiving the 2020 United Nations Military Gender Adviser of the Year Award.

In conclusion, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines reaffirms its view that lasting peace and security can be achieved only through nationally owned and socially inclusive political solutions. Peace operations are an effective political tool that can help reconfigure the social fabric of conflict-affected States, facilitate humanitarian delivery and lay the foundation for post-conflict peacebuilding and development. To be most effective, peacekeeping must always be conducted with the utmost respect for the sovereignty and political independence of host countries.

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

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I wish to thank China for convening this important meeting on the security and safety of United Nations peacekeepers.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement submitted by the representative of Brazil on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (annex 19).

I also thank Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Mr. Atul Khare and Mr. Gilles Michaud for their valuable briefings.

Peacekeeping operations are a key pillar of the role entrusted to the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security. The experience of recent decades has shown that peacekeeping operations have spared humankind many conflicts by preventing conflict from erupting in the first place and by helping to support political stabilization processes throughout the world. Peacekeepers have also been responsible for protecting civilians, preventing human rights violations and ensuring the delivery of humanitarian assistance, in addition to other noble humanitarian duties.

We once again salute the efforts of all the women and men who contribute to making the world a safer and more peaceful place, and we remember with reverence those who have sacrificed their lives for the cause of peace.

Peacekeeping operations have undergone significant developments and radical changes at all levels since their inception. Such an evolution has made it necessary to re-evaluate their role and reconsider the nature of their duties. United Nations peacekeeping missions are increasingly operating amid new threats and in hostile and complex environments, owing to the presence of armed and terrorist groups and organized crime activity. Peacekeeping operations also encounter difficulties on the ground and have their movements restricted and, on occasion, their missions disrupted.

In that connection, we are all deeply concerned by the tragic escalation of attacks against United Nations peacekeepers in recent years, and this year in particular. Further concerted efforts must be made to avoid exacerbating those threats and risks.

We appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General to promote the safety and security of peacekeepers through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, and we thank the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs for helping to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers in a more effective manner, particularly while tackling the coronavirus disease pandemic. We express our satisfaction with the independent report *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers* and the Action Plan that was adopted.

In that context, we recall resolution 2518 (2020) and all relevant Security Council resolutions on the issue, as well as the launch of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, which Tunisia took part in establishing.

My delegation would like to emphasize the following points.

The mandate issued by the Security Council to establish a peace operation in any conflict area in the world is of paramount importance to the safety and security of peacekeepers. Prior to adopting a mandate, it is necessary to conduct a proactive, in-depth risk study and collect and analyse all information that could have a direct or indirect impact on the safety of peacekeepers, so as to be able to prepare carefully and accurately for all potential risks.

Troops participating in peacekeeping operations must be educated about potential risks and receive predeployment training geared towards the challenges they may face. Key priorities include obtaining first aid training, making full use of all information and employing relevant technologies to anticipate and reduce risks.

It is imperative that peacekeeping operations be provided with the tools and equipment they need to repulse any attacks against United Nations missions and that missions should operate in constant coordination with the host State authorities.

My delegation supports the effective partnership and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, with a view to sharing experiences and assessing risks, thereby contributing to the success of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions and ensuring the protection of peacekeepers.

Annex 16**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, Dame Barbara Woodward**

I thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's open debate, and I would like to thank our briefers for their insightful remarks.

At the outset, I want to join others in paying tribute to those brave peacekeepers killed or injured in the course of their duties. Addressing the threats facing our peacekeepers requires commitment from all of us. The Secretary-General recognized that in his Action for Peacekeeping initiative. Safety and security must remain a central pillar of its implementation.

Just as we ask our peacekeepers to perform to the best of their abilities and the Secretariat to put in place the required levels of support, it is our duty, as troop- and police-contributing countries, to provide the training and equipment to enable our personnel to fulfil their roles safely.

First, thorough and mission-specific predeployment preparation is key to understanding and tackling threats. That is why, through our partnerships with other troop contributors and training centres, the United Kingdom provides training and mentoring in counter-improvised explosive device capabilities, peacekeeping intelligence and first-aid skills to help prepare peacekeepers before they deploy. For example, the United Kingdom has provided more than \$1.4 million of support to the Humanitarian Peace Support School in Nairobi, helping deliver 31 courses to more than 600 personnel from 12 police- and troop-contributing countries.

Secondly, giving missions an accurate threat picture allows them to anticipate and mitigate risks and challenge those targeting them. The deployment of the United Kingdom's Reconnaissance Task Group in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali demonstrates the value of peacekeeping intelligence in connecting the Mission with difficult-to-reach communities and improving situational awareness. That contributes to both safety and security and the protection of civilians.

Thirdly, when incidents occur, peacekeepers should be assured that they will benefit from reliable casualty evacuation and the right medical care needed in the first crucial minutes and hours. The availability of adequately equipped and performing air support is often key to that. Response times, processes and capabilities must be thoroughly stress-tested to ensure that they are robust, dependable and in line with medical needs.

Finally, we must be united in our action to hold the perpetrators of attacks against peacekeepers accountable through the adoption of sanctions by the Security Council and the pursuit of justice by host States. It is also the duty of host States to ensure that missions be free to work without violations of their status-of-forces agreement. We are concerned about the recent spike in such violations against the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, and I join others in calling on the authorities to ensure the security and free movement of United Nations personnel.

Annex 17**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Richard Mills**

I thank our briefers for their comprehensive updates this morning.

The United States welcomes this opportunity to discuss this critically important issue as we look ahead to the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers later this week. We are deeply grateful — and here let me echo Mr. Jürgenson — for the military, police and civilian personnel who have served in United Nations peacekeeping operations. We honour the more than 4,000 peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace, those who have been injured and those who continue to risk their lives.

According to the most recent data, the United Nations has already lost more peacekeepers this year to malicious acts than in all of last year. Since the pandemic started, we have lost 30 peacekeepers to the coronavirus disease. Given that urgent situation, we, as the Security Council, as many have said before me, must focus on concrete actions to improve peacekeeper safety, which is best achieved by ensuring that peacekeepers have achievable and realistic mandates, as well as the resources and skills they need to implement those mandates. The 2017 report prepared by Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*, made clear that the better the performance of peacekeepers — whether in terms of their operational proficiency, skills, conduct or discipline — the safer and more secure they will be.

With that in mind, the United States is proud that we have now built more than 50 partnerships with troop- and police-contributing countries. We have invested more than \$70 million a year in those capacity-building partnerships. We focus on them because they have proven effective in making tangible progress on the ground in both improving peacekeeper performance and making peacekeepers safer. To continue our momentum, we, alongside our co-host Rwanda, will focus on ways to build partnerships to increase both performance and safety during our July preparatory meeting in advance of the Seoul Peacekeeping Ministerial.

I will now take a moment to describe a few positive outcomes from our partnership efforts.

With the support of the United States Global Peace Operations Initiative, United States partners have now developed more than 60 new critical enabling capabilities. That means new capabilities, such as level-2 hospitals. The United States has provided more than \$28 million to deliver hospital equipment and build up hospital capacity with the aim of reducing the critical time from when a peacekeeper is wounded to when she or he can receive care. With our partners, we also provide counter-improvised explosive device training and equipment, including by providing armoured personnel carriers to contingents in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, which in our assessment is the most dangerous peacekeeping mission. That helps protect peacekeepers from threats, while also enabling them to deliver on their mandates. To assist with leadership training, which was another gap identified in the Dos Santos Cruz report, we developed a formed police unit command staff course, which the United Nations has since adopted as part of its standard predeployment certification.

When peacekeepers sexually exploit or abuse the people they were sent to protect, it not only makes peacekeepers less effective but also puts them more at risk, as they lose the situational awareness that comes only from a strong relationship with local populations. Research has shown that the integration of women into

peacekeeping units better enables those units to engage with local communities and may result in fewer incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse. The United States has assisted partner countries in reducing the barriers to women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping — building female barracks, latrines and showers at training centres, for example — and we stand ready to partner with troop- and police-contributing countries in that effort.

Finally, let me end by saying that we would like to underline, as part of this discussion, the importance of respect for status-of-forces agreements that host Governments sign with United Nations peacekeeping missions. Host Government cooperation with missions and Governments' willingness to uphold those agreements are essential for keeping peacekeepers safe. Status-of-forces agreements guarantee peacekeepers' ability to move and communicate freely, seek medical care when necessary and receive essential supplies. We are concerned about violations of those agreements in the Central African Republic and call on its Government to respect its commitments in the Central African Republic under the status-of-forces agreement, while ensuring that any forces or elements in the country at the invitation of the Government of the Central African Republic also respect the agreement. We are particularly concerned about reports of Russian instructors engaged in security sector reform there. They need to deconflict their activities with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, respect the status-of-forces agreement and ensure humanitarian access.

The United States looks forward to continuing to work with the Security Council and all stakeholders in determining the concrete actions we can take to make peacekeeping safer and more effective.

Annex 18**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dang Dinh Quy**

I would like to express my appreciation to the three Under-Secretaries-General for their valuable briefings. Viet Nam associates itself with the statement submitted by Brazil on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (annex 19).

United Nations peacekeepers promote the de-escalation and cessation of armed conflicts, help the implementation of ceasefires and political agreements, protect civilians, provide conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance and so on. Therefore, their well-being and safety are critical to the success of the mission's mandate and to the Security Council's responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Unfortunately, United Nations peacekeepers continue to fall victim to attacks and incidents, many of which are deliberately targeted. Viet Nam condemns all malicious and intended attacks against peacekeeping personnel.

For the long term, international law, including international humanitarian law, must be strictly observed by all parties. All parties must abide by the relevant Security Council resolutions, stop targeting peacekeepers and uphold the basic principles of international humanitarian law.

For more immediate goals, peacekeepers must be properly prepared, equipped and afforded the best protection. In that context, I wish to share the following four points.

First, good preparations save lives. Troop- and police-contributing countries, the United Nations and other partners need to work together to further improve the preparedness of deployed personnel. That can be achieved through a complete and continually improved training cycle, which includes training before and during deployment, post-deployment debriefing and updated training programmes based on lessons learned.

Secondly, being properly equipped and resourced can make a big difference. Traditional hardware can directly protect peacekeepers. The employment of technologies has proved effective in indirectly guarding them from harm; for example, the use of unmanned aerial vehicles improves real-time situational awareness for better decision-making. Critical mission intelligence can also be gained by building trust and good relations with the host country, local communities and people. Adequate resources can ensure that the mission does not have to choose among its equally important priorities and take risks.

Thirdly, protection from emerging threats is urgent. I wish to highlight two such threats — the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and improvised explosive devices (IEDs). As most peacekeeping mandates are in COVID-19-affected countries with limited resources, it is important that peacekeepers be fully vaccinated. We call on the United Nations, partners and countries to work towards that goal. Last month, Viet Nam sent fully vaccinated personnel of the third tour of our level-2 field hospital in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan.

As IEDs are a daily threat to peacekeepers in many locations, the United Nations, partners and troop- and police-contributing countries need to strengthen their cooperation to ensure that all peacekeepers in the field are equipped, informed and trained to mitigate the threat posed by IEDs, as called for in presidential statement S/PRST/2021/8, adopted last month.

Fourthly, special protection and attention must be given to women peacekeepers, as they can face multiple threats and risks. Only by doing that can we progressively and sustainably ensure the stronger participation of women peacekeepers.

In conclusion, Viet Nam remains a strong supporter of United Nations peacekeeping. As a troop-contributing country, we take to heart the importance of improving the safety and security of our peacekeepers, particularly women peacekeepers. We look forward to working closely with all partners to further that cause.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Ronaldo Costa Filho, on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers**

I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Security Council as co-Chair of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers. Let me also thank Under-Secretaries-General Lacroix, Khare and Michaud for their informative and insightful briefings.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are a major instrument for maintaining international peace and security at the disposal of the international community. They have played an important role in promoting political processes, monitoring the implementation of ceasefires, protecting civilians, promoting human rights, assisting in humanitarian relief and bringing hope to people in areas affected by conflict around the world.

Meanwhile, threats stemming from regional conflicts, ethnic strife, terrorism and the use of improvised explosive devices, compounded by the coronavirus disease pandemic, pose greater risks to Blue Helmets in the 12 peacekeeping operations that are currently deployed.

In the past 70-plus years, more than 4,000 peacekeepers from over 120 countries lost their lives in the line of duty. While there has been a discernible downward trend since 2018, we saw with concern an alarming spike in the number of fatalities among peacekeepers last year and in the opening months of 2021. Ensuring the safety and security of the men and women in uniform who risk their lives serving under the United Nations flag is crucial and must be a collective priority.

In that context, Brazil, China, Indonesia and Rwanda jointly established the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, which started off with more than 50 members, coming from every geographic group. The members of the new Group of Friends are major stakeholders in peacekeeping, including troop- and police-contributing countries members of the Security Council and the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations and current, as well as former, host nations. The broad diversity of the Group, reflected in its original composition, demonstrates the commitment to inclusiveness and cross-regional representation shown by its members.

It is our collective goal to build a platform with a view to strengthening information-sharing, policy coordination and capacity-building so as to support the achievement of substantive progress in enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers in the field on the basis of a multidimensional approach. The Group of Friends highlights the importance of the inclusion of a gender perspective at all stages of the deployment of peacekeepers, that is, planning, training and evaluation, with a view to mitigating the risks to their safety and security on the ground.

We welcome the progress achieved so far by Member States, the Secretariat and field missions in enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers in a comprehensive manner and recall resolution 2518 (2020) and all relevant Security Council resolutions on the matter, as well as the Secretary-General's Action Plan to Improve the Security of United Nations Peacekeepers. It is the collective duty of all stakeholders involved to translate that global awareness into concrete actions.

The time is ripe to enhance our joint efforts and undertake the shared responsibility to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. The Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers is keen to work with the Secretariat and all Member States to make contributions to that effect, including through the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Argentina to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

Reality shows that the increasing complexity in which peacekeeping operations carry out their work exposes troops to ever greater threats to their physical and psychological well-being. That hinders the possibility of making such missions a more effective tool for international stability and security. In that regard, Argentina would like to focus in particular on six factors that it considers key to that end.

The first factor is the need for increased security and safety training, both in the predeployment phase and in the field. Improved personnel training is the only way to be able to anticipate threats adequately and efficiently. Argentina has therefore always stressed the need for those with the highest capabilities in that area to cooperate with those who have not yet reached such levels in order to ensure that personnel have equal capabilities. That would have a positive impact on the protection of each individual deployed and of the unit as a whole.

Argentina once again reiterates its commitment to training and capacity-building for peacekeeping. Through the Argentine Joint Training Centre for Peace Operations, Argentina provides excellent training and instruction to the men and women who will serve for peace in the context of the United Nations. In that regard, Argentina also stresses the need to provide safety and security capabilities in the field, taking into account the particular threats that each mission entails for the deployed personnel, so that there is complementarity with the training received during the predeployment phase.

The second factor that Argentina would like to mention is the urgent need to address the use of improvised explosive devices, which remain one of the main threats to deployed personnel. In that regard, as stressed by Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Mexico at the most recent substantive session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, Argentina believes it extremely useful to provide for the possibility of deploying mobile training units together with the United Nations Mine Action Service, where relevant and at the request of troop- and police-contributing States, for the demining, detection and disposal of the above-mentioned devices.

As a third factor for consideration, our country believes that incorporating new technologies for both individual and camp security is an indispensable element in dealing with the threats to which deployed personnel are exposed. In that regard, it is particularly important to bear in mind that not all countries are in the same technological and economic position to purchase the appropriate equipment, including for the purpose of training in the use of such technologies in the field. It is therefore crucial to anticipate those gaps in order to ensure the adequate protection of personnel.

As a fourth factor to be highlighted, Argentina believes that building a genuine culture of accountability against impunity for perpetrators of attacks against peacekeepers is an essential element in their protection and safeguarding. That is not only for the reparation of victims but also as an example to prevent similar conduct. In that regard, Argentina supports the systematic documentation of such attacks, both to be aware of the existing threats in each peacekeeping operation and thus warn the personnel deployed there and for the parties involved to shoulder their responsibilities as guarantors of rights.

The fifth factor that our country wishes to highlight in that context is the need to improve medical support in the field, as well as infrastructure and personnel training, bearing in mind the fact that a considerable number of casualties in peacekeeping operations are due to issues of occupational health and safety. Argentina therefore believes that the improvement of personnel training in that regard would be beneficial, together with promoting the deployment of more doctors and health personnel in general. To that end, calls by the Secretariat encouraging the recruitment of health personnel could be an effective way to publicize the current shortage in that area, thereby addressing the current situation.

As a sixth and final factor, Argentina would like to point out the importance of acknowledging gender issues in peacekeeping operations in order to ensure an enabling environment for each of their members to have access to the necessary medical services in line with their needs. That would contribute to the improved performance of personnel in achieving the mandate and fulfils the obligation to recognize and protect their human rights. Having more female peacekeepers would greatly improve communication and relations between peacekeeping operations and local communities, especially with women and girls.

Argentina believes it a priority to continue the debate on the training and instruction of peacekeeping personnel. We encourage ongoing work to engender a constructive, transparent and inclusive dialogue between States and other stakeholders. That will allow us to continue to bring the most value to the societies and nations where troops are deployed and will contribute to the more effective performance of uniformed personnel in the field for the success of mission mandates as part of the collective commitment under the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Annex 21**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Australia, on behalf of Canada, Australia and New Zealand**

There is no higher priority than the safety and security of our peacekeepers and the civilians whom they are mandated to protect. We pay tribute to all those Blue Helmets who paid the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace, and we call for greater accountability for crimes against peacekeepers.

In recent years, our collective efforts have seen meaningful progress in reforming peacekeeping, particularly through the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and, more recently, the Action for Peacekeeping Plus (A4P+). However, as the security environment deteriorates in some missions and new threats emerge, peacekeeping missions must be able to meet those challenges.

We must do all that we can to generate the right capabilities, resources and mindset for missions to deliver their mandates safely and effectively. There is a clear need to enhance the peacekeeping toolkit. Canada, Australia and New Zealand (CANZ) encourage peacekeeping intelligence, early warning and rapid-response systems to be more effectively utilized, including through the necessary predeployment training. Not only are such capabilities essential to protecting peacekeepers, but they are also critical to the protection of civilians. We also welcome the focus on stronger strategic and operational integration as a priority of A4P+. That is essential within missions and, more broadly, across the entire peacekeeping enterprise.

CANZ reiterates the strong link between peacekeeping performance, safety and security. We welcome the implementation of the Integrated Peacekeeping Performance and Accountability Framework, which we see as an important mechanism to support accountability for improved safety and security. The Action Plan to Improve the Security of United Nations Peacekeepers has been central to improved security, and we call for the full implementation of its recommendations. CANZ also takes great interest in the implementation of the recommendations made by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations.

Conventional threats such as improvised explosive devices and attacks on peacekeepers rightly demand a significant focus, especially in an evolving threat environment. But it is also critical that we focus on eliminating the more insidious dangers that can occur within peacekeeping missions. Bullying, sexual harassment and assault continue to undermine a safe and inclusive work environment, particularly for women peacekeepers, and we must work tirelessly to create a culture of zero tolerance. We must also ensure that women peacekeepers have access to appropriately fitting equipment and necessary medical services throughout their deployment.

Sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeeping personnel is not only an egregious assault on those they are mandated to protect; it also threatens the legitimacy of peacekeeping missions in the countries in which they operate and, by extension, the safety and security of peacekeepers serving in good faith. We must uphold the Secretary-General's commitment to zero tolerance across the United Nations system and work to eradicate all forms of sexual exploitation and abuse.

Over the past year, peacekeeping missions have shown immense resilience during the coronavirus disease pandemic — we applaud ongoing efforts to roll out vaccinations in the field and by Member States prior to deployment. As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, improvements to the quality and availability of medical support, including casualty evacuation, should remain a top priority, which includes placing greater emphasis on the mental health of peacekeepers. CANZ reiterates

calls for the systematic documentation of all status-of-forces agreement violations, which continue to pose a risk to safety by impeding medical evacuations and the freedom of movement.

There is also much work to be done in addressing occupational safety and health issues, which are avoidable and, regrettably, remain a major cause of casualties. Work accidents, including driving incidents and illness, both require increased focus during the predeployment phase through better training and medical screening.

CANZ encourages the adoption of a holistic and systematic approach to improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. That remains critical for missions to effectively deliver their mandate, protect civilians and support sustainable peace.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the United Nations, Rabab Fatima**

I commend China for convening this important debate today. I also thank the briefers for their insightful briefings.

We align ourselves with the statement submitted on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (annex 19).

For more than seven decades, peacekeeping has remained the United Nations flagship contribution to international peace and security and conflict resolution. Peacekeepers are invaluable assets for international peace and security.

They are also the most affected agents of peace, as they are deployed in very fragile and dangerous environments that are characterized by ever-evolving forms of threats. The alarming increase in fatalities, injuries, kidnappings and other deliberate attacks against peacekeepers is of great concern. The coronavirus disease pandemic has not only affected the implementation of peacekeeping mandates but also posed serious challenges to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

As the leading troop- and police-contributing country, with about 7,000 of our men and women in Blue Helmets deployed in various complex conflict zones, ensuring the safety and security of our contingents is of paramount importance to us.

Progress has been made in recent years, particularly in raising awareness of the safety and security of peacekeepers. That is evident in the adoption of resolution 2518 (2020) by the Security Council in 2020, which Bangladesh co-sponsored. We welcome the presidential statement issued today (S/PRST/2021/11) and thank Council members for their efforts in that regard.

We would like to share some of our priorities for the Council's consideration.

First, the safety and security of peacekeepers is a shared responsibility of the international community. Therefore, we cannot emphasize enough the seminal importance of meaningful triangular cooperation and consultations among Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat in setting up the mandates. In that regard, we believe the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations could serve as important guidance.

Secondly, it is also imperative that peacekeeping missions be adequately funded in order to achieve their objectives. Doing more with less is an unsustainable prescription in potentially dangerous operational situations. We call upon the Security Council to ensure that United Nations peacekeeping operations have clear and realistic mandates and that sufficient resources are allocated that are consistent with the mandate and the situation on the ground.

Thirdly, given the complex political and security environments it is important that peacekeeping missions remain agile and effective in implementing their mandates. The United Nations needs to enhance improved training and capacity-building, including the application of new technologies among Member States, particularly troop- and police-contributing countries. We call for reviewing and ensuring the uniformity of United Nations standards on training and performance, including, but not limited to, countering improvised explosive devices.

Fourthly, the safety of peacekeepers is also closely linked to effective coordination and information-sharing among and between relevant stakeholders, as well as effective cooperation with host authorities. The availability of reliable intelligence and timely logistical support are important to ensure maximum

performance with minimum risk of casualty, and they should be made available to the peacekeepers during operations.

Fifthly, the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda, as a cross-cutting issue, should remain a priority for the Council, and gender dimensions should therefore be integrated in all stages of peacekeeping operations. The issue of the safety and security of women peacekeepers, including threats of sexual harassment against them, must be tackled with urgency in order to ensure effective peacekeeping.

Sixthly, the pandemic has posed new threats to peacekeepers, with additional tasks and increased risks. We must ensure the vaccination of all peacekeepers on a priority basis. In addition to that, we would like to request that the Council incorporate better preparedness in peacekeeping mandates in future. Adequate medical facilities should be provided, and qualified personnel should be deployed in the field. We need to develop a comprehensive strategy to address that growing phenomenon.

Finally, there must be accountability for attacks against peacekeepers. We are happy to see that element being reflected as one of the seven priorities of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. Cooperation with host authorities is critical in that regard.

Annex 23

Statement by the Permanent Mission Belgium to the United Nations

United Nations peacekeepers are often deployed in complex political and security environments, face asymmetrical threats and have increasingly become a target for hostile actors. The importance of protecting the protectors cannot be overemphasized.

We want to commend the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Operational Support for the important steps taken to improve safety and security and strengthen the casualty evacuation capabilities of field missions, data collection, peacekeepers' situational awareness and so on, which are priorities of the Action Plan to Improve the Security of Peacekeepers and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Belgium honours the memory of those peacekeepers who have fallen victim to violence. A lot remains to be done to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers. The following elements could further that work.

First, the most important line of effort remains ensuring the adequate and standardized training of peacekeepers, as well as providing them with access to appropriate equipment, thereby enabling them to work confidently in asymmetrical threat environments. It is the primary responsibility of each troop- and police-contributing country to deploy only well-trained and well-equipped units.

Secondly, among the main threats against peacekeepers are improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The United Nations must continue to strengthen IED threat mitigation at the mission level and increase predeployment and in-mission training, including through the deployment of mobile training teams. Peacekeeping mission capabilities should be adapted to specific high-risk operational contexts by ensuring that missions be provided with adequate and high-tech equipment, including counter-IED equipment and explosive ordnance disposal equipment; modern technologies, such as unarmed aerial systems; mine-protected vehicles/armoured personnel carriers; signal-block devices; and expert engineers to supervise anti-IED operations. An adequate system for effective exchange of information on all incidents involving IEDs is crucial.

Intelligence capacities and situational awareness in field missions should also be strengthened by deploying intelligence and surveillance capabilities for the detection of IED threat locations. In that regard, there is a need to better implement United Nations military peacekeeping intelligence policy in all peacekeeping missions in order to enhance information and intelligence-led peace operations. An adequate system for effective exchange of information on all incidents involving IEDs is crucial.

A more integrated and comprehensive approach is necessary. In that context, we stress the importance of proper weapons and ammunition management by peacekeeping operations and host nations, in line with the safety standards of relevant United Nations manuals, policies and standard operating procedures. We also encourage Member States and the Secretariat to better equip peacekeeping operations in the area of weapons and ammunition management; strengthen host Government capacities; address the proliferation of weapons and ammunition; prevent loss and other diversions of military equipment, including of possible precursors for improvised explosive devices; and prevent accidental explosions.

A more integrated approach to the planning of operations will enhance not only the overall performance of missions but also the safety of United Nations personnel. In particular, enhancing situational awareness by utilizing innovative technologies

and integrated analysis and planning across civilian, military and police components is essential for better handling the threats of IEDs.

Thirdly, an all-inclusive approach, including strong partnerships among the United Nations, troop- and police-contributing countries, host nations and local citizens, as well as other stakeholders, including civil society organizations, will result in a more integrated response from the United Nations system, thereby enhancing safety and security for civilians and peacekeepers.

Finally, where efforts focus on stabilizing fragile countries, peacekeeping missions should evolve their capabilities and systems to remain agile and effective at confronting terrorist threats. It is time to give further consideration to the principles of peacekeeping in those changing and challenging environments.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Ronaldo Costa Filho**

The contribution of United Nations peacekeeping operations to the maintenance of international peace and security is beyond dispute. Similarly, it is hard to deny that the targeting of Blue Helmets amounts to attacking what peacekeeping and the flag of the United Nations stand for.

While the number of fatalities among peacekeepers has dropped steadily in the past few years, we witnessed a worrisome uptick in 2020, which should prompt us to reflect on measures to avoid that unacceptable statistic repeating itself.

As we approach the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, the Brazilian Government mourns every single loss of life sustained by peacekeeping operations and offers its most sincere condolences to the families of the fallen. We are also disheartened by the deaths of peacekeepers as a result of the coronavirus disease, while recognizing the commendable job done jointly by troop- and police-contributing countries, host nations, the Secretariat, field missions and other key stakeholders in avoiding the spread of the disease in conflict-affected areas.

Brazil is especially concerned about the use of improvised explosive devices against peacekeepers. We must persevere relentlessly in mitigating that threat, including through the United Nations Mine Action Service.

Brazil encourages the Secretariat to sustain its efforts to ensure the implementation of the Action Plan to Improve the Security of United Nations Peacekeepers. We commend the efforts undertaken by all stakeholders to fully implement resolution 2518 (2020) — the first-ever resolution dedicated exclusively to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Brazil has a long-standing tradition of contributing to peacekeeping operations, spanning more than 70 years. As many as 46,000 Brazilian civilians, military and police personnel have been deployed to 40 of the 72 peacekeeping operations ever created under the United Nations flag. Brazil is proud of the track record of its Blue Helmets for their professionalism and commitment to the mission, as well as to United Nations principles, in spite of the insurmountable risks they often face as they perform their duties.

Providing well-trained troops is an indispensable factor in improving performance, enhancing safety and security and ensuring the successful implementation of mandates. Blue Helmets should not be deployed without specific preparation that is tailor-made for the operating environment they will be deployed to.

We are especially proud of the work done by the Brazilian Peace Operations Joint Training Centre and the Naval Peace Operations Training Centre, both of which offer training predeployment partnerships for a broad range of international partners. Brazil is also proud of the mobile training team specializing in jungle warfare that is deployed to the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a case in point of how the provision of adequate training can strengthen the safety and security of uniformed personnel.

Brazil is a strong supporter of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative — as well as the Action for Peacekeeping Plus follow-up initiative — which we view as a constructive approach to dealing with peacekeeping in all its aspects, not least the safety and security of Blue Helmets.

Recently, Brazil proudly joined China, Indonesia and Rwanda in establishing the new Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers.

The co-Chairs are grateful to the more than 50 Member States that answered the call and accepted the invitation to join the Group of Friends. The broad and diverse composition of that newly established Group of Friends, including several troop- and police-contributing countries, financial contributors, host nations and key stakeholders from every continent, is testimony to the relevance of the Group of Friends and an important asset going forward.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Chile to the United Nations**

[Original: English and Spanish]

We are grateful to China's presidency of the Security Council during the month of May for organizing this open debate.

As a member of the Group of Friends on Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, Chile associates itself with the statement submitted by the Permanent Mission of Brazil on behalf of the Group (annex 19).

We firmly believe that, in both peacekeeping operations and other field missions, only a joint and integrated commitment among all actors will allow us to adequately address and cope with new threats that are detected or that unexpectedly arise on the ground, such as global pandemics.

The new dimensions of conflicts, many of which have been exacerbated in the context of the coronavirus disease pandemic, have directly impacted the security of missions, which have been subjected to a series of attacks on deployed personnel. Against that backdrop, we emphasize that the safety of our contingents is essential for the fulfilment of mandates, and thereby for ensuring success in the main role of missions: protecting civilians.

In that regard, Chile supported resolution 2518 (2020), and we value the progress that has been made following the presentation of the report prepared by Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*. But we must still work on the protection and safety of the Blue Helmets.

Attacks on various peacekeeping missions prompt us to reflect and act proactively, with particular emphasis on continuing efforts to ensure that staff have the right technical support capabilities in place to successfully fulfil their role in mission areas. It is also necessary to adequately monitor criminal proceedings and convictions against those who carried out attacks on the work of the Organization on peace and security. We value the contributions of the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which provides for the safety of Blue Helmets among its areas of commitments, as well as the Action for Peacekeeping Plus document, which has put safety among its 2021-2023 priorities, particularly with regard to responsibility for Blue Helmets, including issues related to mental health and the comprehensive well-being of deployed personnel.

We also believe that it is essential to have sufficient and predictable resources for the correct implementation of mandates, in line with the cross-cutting agenda for prevention, the protection of civilians and the inclusion of women in processes involving United Nations participation in peace and security on the ground and on our agenda.

In that regard, we stress the importance of providing capacity-building and technical support to address the gender perspective with respect to the safety and security of peacekeepers on the ground, given that addressing diverse needs is necessary to reduce the existing gaps that prevent the full participation of women in peace and security and are present at different stages, such as in the planning, deployment and subsequent evaluation of missions.

We also underline the importance of women's full, equitable and meaningful participation in peace and security and their crucial contribution to the safer and more secure implementation of peacekeeping-operation mandates, in all their components

and leadership positions, as we have learned from our experience of including women in activities related to disarmament, demining and cross-cutting issues; communication and public and strategic information-sharing; and strengthening cooperation between civilians and uniformed personnel.

We look forward to contributing to this discussion what we have learned and experienced in the missions we have been involved in, since we understand the importance of maintaining the inclusion of a conflict-sensitive, multidimensional perspective and consider it an ethical imperative for our Organization to be able to deliver all the necessary tools and guarantees to ensure the contingent safety and security of peacekeepers while implementing their mandates.

Annex 26**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, Martin Bille Hermann**

On behalf of the Nordic countries — Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and my own country, Denmark — I want to thank the People's Republic of China for convening this timely meeting.

While United Nations peacekeeping consists of many integrated issues, peacekeepers themselves remain the core component of that tool. We know that, when troops and police are unable to protect themselves adequately, they are unable to protect those whom they serve. Therefore, as mission theatres become increasingly dangerous, improving the safety and security of our peacekeepers rightly remains a fundamental priority for the Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

The initiative provides the overarching umbrella for ongoing efforts to improve not just the safety of peacekeepers but also the leadership, performance, accountability and effectiveness of United Nations peacekeeping operations on the ground. Despite important progress, more needs to be done, not just by the Secretariat but also by Member States, including troop- and police-contributing countries and host countries. We as Member States have a shared commitment to ensuring that robust mandates and difficult tasks are matched by the resources needed to fulfil them. That includes providing capabilities that are vital to the safety of peacekeepers, including technical, medical and logistical support for missions.

It also remains clear that skilled peacekeepers are safe peacekeepers. By enhancing the qualifications of our peacekeepers and ensuring that they have the proper equipment, the effectiveness of our troops and police increases, ranging from basic skills to planning and improvised explosive device-threat awareness. Ultimately, that contributes to improving their safety and security as well. Enhanced training, including thorough training of trainers and the development of training materials for both troops and police, will therefore continue to be a focus area for the Nordic countries.

Also, good conduct and the accountability of United Nations peacekeepers remain axiomatic. In the end, the accountability of peacekeepers to the populations they serve is directly linked to ensuring their own safety and their accountability to themselves.

The Nordic commitment to peacekeeping is as old as the instrument itself. From the day that peacekeeping missions were first put to use as a means to address international crises, personnel from the Nordic countries, as well as substantial unit contributions and supplies of critical capabilities, have been deployed alongside troops, police and corrections personnel from more than 120 Member States. Moreover, such contributions have gone hand in hand with our efforts to continuously improve the tool of peacekeeping, including through training and capacity-building efforts and the provision of support for improvements at the policy level.

Access to reliable, relevant and up-to-date information about the local context is key to ensuring that peacekeepers can operate both effectively and safely. Therefore, the Nordic countries have supported the efforts of the Office of Military Affairs in developing guidance and training on the use of military peacekeeping intelligence to inform both planning and decision-making.

As we look ahead to the Peacekeeping Ministerial to be held in Seoul later this year, the Nordic countries will continue to advocate honouring our shared commitments to reforming United Nations peacekeeping by investing in this ever-important tool in our common toolbox.

Finally, our commitment to the safety, security and well-being of our troops, police and corrections officers does not end when their deployments do. Taking care of those who take care of us also means making a political commitment to having the interests and well-being of our peacekeepers at heart after they have taken off their uniforms.

This Saturday, 29 May 2021, we pay tribute to those who paid the highest price and those who continue to put their lives at risk every day in order to serve and protect. Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden honour and respect all those who serve and have served under the auspices of United Nations peacekeeping. The International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, as always, will be a day of reflection and tribute.

Annex 27**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Cristian Espinosa Cañizares**

[Original: Spanish]

I wish to express my delegation's appreciation for the convening of this debate on the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel one year on from the adoption of resolution 2518 (2020), which Ecuador was honoured to co-sponsor and which was adopted on 30 March 2020 (see S/2020/268) during our presidency of the Security Council.

The adoption of that resolution was all the more relevant amid the pandemic. While it does not mention the coronavirus disease, it contributed to health-protection efforts. In that regard, I would like to recall Ecuador's statement of 18 February, during the general debate of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, when we commended the responsive measures taken by the Secretariat to incorporate mechanisms to mitigate the spread of the pandemic, thereby protecting the health of peacekeeping personnel and communities alike without disrupting operational continuity.

The principal aim of peacekeeping operations is undoubtedly to protect civilian populations, and it is precisely to achieve that aim that it is necessary to ensure that personnel have adequate tools at their disposal.

In August 2020, Ecuador also co-sponsored resolution 2538 (2020), on women in peacekeeping operations, in which the Council called upon Member States and the Secretariat to ensure safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environments for women in peacekeeping operations, with adequate infrastructure, facilities, sanitation and protective equipment. The security of peacekeepers, which we must ensure, encompasses an environment free of violence, including sexual harassment.

Ecuador is concerned about the risks posed by terrorist attacks against peacekeeping missions, in particular the risk posed by improvised explosive devices. For that reason, we were privileged to co-sponsor the Arria Formula meeting of the Security Council on the theme "Protecting the peacekeeper: suppressing the deployment of improvised explosive devices against peace operations", convened by Kenya on 26 March.

On that occasion, I called on the Council to strengthen uniform performance standards and capabilities through specialized training. In addition to technology, progress must continue in the area of intergovernmental capacity-building cooperation. I also reiterated the need to ensure an appropriate intelligence overview of the theatres to which peace missions are deployed.

Against that backdrop, on 27 April Ecuador joined the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, co-chaired by Brazil, China, Indonesia and Rwanda, with the aim of raising awareness on safety and security needs as well as strengthening coordination with the Secretariat and promoting actions that contribute to the peace and security objectives of the Organization. It is in the same spirit that today I align myself with the statement submitted on behalf of the Group of Friends by the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho (annex 19).

I also underscore the progress made in implementing the 2018 Action Plan to Improve the Security of Peacekeepers.

Ecuador respectfully urges the Security Council to continue providing a platform for dialogue on this topic, which helps mobilize the efforts required on the part of the international community.

In conclusion, I must stress the importance of implementing resolutions 2532 (2020) and 2565 (2021) to facilitate humanitarian corridors and access for humanitarian assistance, as well as all resolutions on the protection of civilians, which are also of relevance to the security of peacekeeping personnel.

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

At the outset, I would like to congratulate the People's Republic of China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council and to extend my wishes for a successful tenure. I also thank you, Sir, for convening this timely reflection on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers remains a top priority for Egypt as a major troop- and police-contributing country. We acknowledge and appreciate all efforts undertaken by the Secretariat to date to ensure that our peacekeepers are safe and protected. However, we are deeply concerned about the recent rising trend in fatalities as a result of malicious attacks against our peacekeepers. Since January 2021, Egypt has lost two peacekeepers in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, and two of our peacekeepers have been wounded.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic situation is also worrisome. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Egypt has lost two peacekeepers to COVID-19 in the Central African Republic, while other peacekeepers have also tested positive.

It is therefore imperative that we address this challenge holistically and collectively in a way that improves the resilience of peacekeeping operations, as follows.

We must strengthen the capacity of peacekeeping operations to identify, analyse and respond to security challenges through improved situational awareness/peacekeeping intelligence and better use of technologies.

Adequate medical resources must be provided in the field throughout the life of a mission. We reiterate the recommendation of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations to conduct a mapping exercise of the status of existing medical capabilities in missions with a view to addressing any gaps.

Troop- and police-contributing countries must be reimbursed in a timely manner, considering the increasing burden that they are shouldering, not only as troop-contributors but also simultaneously as financial contributors. In that regard, Member States must pay their assessed contributions in full, on time and without any conditions.

We must ensure accountability in cases of crimes against peacekeepers, which will serve as an important deterrent for similar crimes. That requires continued engagement and dialogue with host countries to build institutional capacities to fight impunity.

Troop- and police-contributing countries have a responsibility to ensure that their personnel are well trained with the requisite equipment. In the meantime, the Secretariat must tailor United Nations training manuals to the threat environment in each mission and expand partnerships to address any training gaps, in addition to translating those manuals into the six official languages of the United Nations. Adequate resources should also be allocated for in-mission training programmes.

The impact of the pandemic on our peacekeepers must be mitigated. We acknowledge the swift measures taken by the United Nations to adapt and adjust the work of field missions in order to mitigate the impact of the pandemic. For our part, we continue to apply quarantine and testing measures and recently started to vaccinate military personnel prior to deployments and rotations. In that connection, we support all efforts to ensure equitable access for all peacekeepers to COVID-19 vaccines. We believe that no one will be truly safe until everyone is safe. Hence,

we encourage countries with vaccine supply capacities to support United Nations efforts to get all peacekeepers vaccinated.

In conclusion, we reiterate Egypt's commitment to supporting all efforts aimed at enhancing the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and making peacekeeping more fit for purpose.

Annex 29**Statement by the Permanent Mission of El Salvador to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

El Salvador thanks the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of China for holding this open debate on "United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers".

As El Salvador contributes troops and police to six United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions, the safety and security of peacekeepers is a top priority for our country.

Along those lines, it should be noted that this open debate is taking place in a context in which peacekeeping faces a wide range of challenges, which have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its multidimensional impacts.

It is noteworthy that despite the significant impact of the current crisis on their work, peacekeepers continue to discharge their mandates and in some cases have even expanded their activities in areas affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in order to strongly support the efforts of States and local communities.

Likewise, El Salvador recognizes the significant progress that has been made in the framework of the implementation of resolutions 2518 (2020) and the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities, which attach importance to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

However, taking into account the fact that peacekeeping personnel continue to face extremely complex threats, including that posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that, unfortunately, they continue to be the target of reprehensible attacks, El Salvador believes it necessary to make further progress in the following areas.

First, the creation and strengthening of capacities in terms of the safety and security of peacekeepers is considered vital to the fulfilment of their mandates. Along those lines, it is important that both the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries ensure that such operations develop those capacities, which will allow them to be agile and effective.

Secondly, El Salvador deems it essential that in addition, troop- and police-contributing countries must be reimbursed in a timely manner for their contributions to peacekeeping activities. Failure to do so would jeopardize the capacity of those countries to participate in missions.

The foregoing is considered highly relevant to the enhancement of personnel training and the creation of specialized capacities that prepare such personnel for specific threats, in accordance with the particular conditions of each mission. Likewise, providing staff with the equipment necessary for the fulfilment of their mandate is crucial; that must be done in a timely manner.

Thirdly, the importance of enhancing the existing cooperation between peacekeeping operations and recipient States is widely recognized, as that would allow for, inter alia, the periodic exchange of relevant information, with a view to minimizing the impact of the threats that personnel face in the field.

Likewise, we believe that the aforementioned measures should be supported by mandates, objectives, command structures and internal rules for peacekeeping

operations that are viable and clearly defined and articulated, with sufficient resources and predictable financing so that they can carry out their functions.

It is also vital that the gender perspective be incorporated into efforts to strengthen the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel, with the aim of contributing to the full, effective and meaningful participation of women in peacekeeping operations.

Similarly, it is crucial that the personnel currently deployed be vaccinated against COVID-19 without delay in order to ensure their health and safety. That would demonstrate a commitment to such personnel, who risk their lives protecting the most vulnerable and maintaining the peace.

El Salvador believes that in future profound transformations must take place in peacekeeping operations in order to ensure that they have the capacity to adapt to emerging threats; indeed, the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel is truly a shared responsibility.

Annex 30**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Ethiopia to the United Nations, Taye Atskeselassie Amde**

We thank China for having organized this important open debate on the safety and security of peacekeepers during the month of its presidency. We also thank Under-Secretaries-General Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Atul Khare and Gilles Michaud for their interventions.

Peacekeeping is one of the available tools in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. It is therefore imperative that peacekeepers be provided with the necessary predeployment and in-mission training, which should also be tailored to the prevailing security challenges faced in specific missions. Equally important is the equipment level and medical services, especially in the context of the global pandemic and other adverse health challenges facing peacekeeping missions.

Peacekeepers face increasingly asymmetric attacks and evolving protection challenges, and they operate in dynamic security environments. In that regard, we must continually invest in initiatives to improve their safety and performance. Deficiencies in terms of safety and security are detrimental to performance and hamper effective mandate delivery.

Ethiopia is a leading contributor to peacekeeping operations and has deployed peacekeepers across continents since the 1950s. Our experience shows that the deployment of sufficiently staffed peacekeeping missions, with police and troop ceiling levels commensurate with the mandate of missions and the allocation of resources, helps minimize risks to the safety and security of Blue Helmets. Recently, drawdowns unjustified by mission requirements caused apparent damage to the health and well-being as well as the security of Blue Helmets.

Over the last seven decades, the United Nations peacekeeping architecture has developed valuable lessons on mitigating risks and addressing complex operational challenges. However, experience and information-sharing among troop- and police-contributing countries are currently underutilized. In addition to triangular partnerships, we must make use of such tools as co-deployments and the light coordination mechanism to bolster training and capacity-building efforts, with a view to enhancing preparedness so as to ensure the safety and security of those we have entrusted with maintaining international peace and security.

Additionally, the safety and security of all who serve under the United Nations flag is our collective responsibility. Strong leadership and coordination at all levels and coordination, including at Headquarters, is critical to enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers. Similarly, the Security Council, troop- and police- contributing countries, Member States and the Secretariat need to work in harmony to provide the conditions necessary to ensure the safety and security of peacekeeping troops.

Such coordination is pivotal in order to set clear, realistic and feasible mandates backed by the necessary resources and ensure the success of peacekeeping operations. Furthermore, there is a clear link between capability and the safety and security of uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel. In that regard, efficient and effective mandate implementation depends on the resource capability of uniformed and civilian peacekeeping personnel to discharge their responsibilities.

Finally, Ethiopia remains committed to playing its part and to working with various partners to prepare for current and future global and regional peace and security challenges. Later this year we will co-host a peacekeeping ministerial

preparatory meeting, together with Indonesia and Japan, on training and capacity-building. We also hope that the Secretary-General's revamped Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative will provide renewed impetus in addressing the evolving challenge facing peacekeepers' safety and security.

Annex 31

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Fiji to the United Nations

Thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers.

United Nations peacekeeping has been by far the most important tool at the disposal of the international community in maintaining international peace and security. The United Nations has been deploying peacekeepers for more than 70 years. More than 4,000 peacekeepers from around the world have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace, across the most difficult regions of the world.

United Nations peacekeeping has evolved in the past 70 years. Peace- and security-related situations are evolving more rapidly than in the past, shaped by the rise of new technologies, the growing intensity of climate change and the rapid internationalization of local and regional conflict. United Nations Blue Helmets operate in increasingly complex political and security environments. In a number of situations, there is very little peace to keep. The increase in peacekeeping fatalities reflects both how complex the peace and security environments are and how dangerous United Nations peace operations have become.

The international community and local communities need United Nations peace operations to be effective, however complex the environment or however risky the tasks. Peacekeepers save lives, they prevent tensions and conflicts in communities from worsening, and they provide the space for humanitarian aid and political mediation to work. To do all this, peacekeepers need to be safe. That means protecting themselves from multiple security threats, protecting the communities they serve and protecting humanitarian workers and others who work in the peacekeeping space.

Nowhere has the vulnerability of peacekeepers been exposed more forcefully than in the context of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Peacekeepers need to be able to protect themselves if they are to be able to serve communities and provide access corridors for humanitarian and health support. The pandemic has exposed the need for multidimensional preparedness and capacity.

The Action for Peacekeeping initiative (A4P) is a shared commitment to making peacekeeping more effective and efficient. Fiji is a proud partner of A4P and is committed to supporting it and its successor, A4P Plus. Both of those initiatives recognize that the safety and security of peacekeepers is key to how well peacekeepers carry out their tasks. Fiji welcomes the progress made so far in the implementation of A4P. More can be done by all stakeholders to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Improving the safety and security of peacekeepers involves greater political commitment by the international community to support peace operations, improving accountability for training, improving performance and equipment, and providing adequate and predictable financing. Each of those requires careful scrutiny.

Fiji would like to highlight the following points.

The United Nations is accountable in terms of ensuring the safety of peacekeepers through the relevant policies, effective leadership and investments in capacity. The troop- and police- contributing countries are also accountable, as they need to ensure that their peacekeepers are well trained and equipped to perform effectively in high-risk and growingly complex environments. That is a shared accountability.

International and regional solidarity and commitment are needed to establish a political environment that supports peacekeepers and peace operations even during periods when their effectiveness may be questioned. Peacekeeping takes time, and the United Nations and the international community should be prepared for the long haul. Those responsible for direct attacks against peacekeepers should always be held accountable and brought to justice, and States parties have a special obligation to support such efforts. Host countries have an important role in ensuring for the safety and security of peacekeepers within their borders. They need to be supported at the regional level and by the international community, and such support should be over the medium term.

United Nations peace operations require adequate and, even more important, predictable medium-term funding. Member States cannot be endlessly asking peacekeepers to do more and more with less. Over time, that will adversely impact field missions, including the safety, security and well-being of peacekeepers.

Peacekeepers require the best possible medical support, as they operate in harsh, austere and hostile environments. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the need for greater investments in the level of medical support that missions have. Surge and standby medical support for peacekeepers needs to be rapidly deployable. Emergency medical care onsite and a reduction in the amount of time required to take casualties to the nearest field hospitals are important considerations if we are to save the lives of peacekeepers.

United Nations peacekeeping need to leverage technology to be effective. Significant progress has been made, but more can be done to universalize the use of new smart technologies across peace operations. Technology enhances and improves monitoring, information analysis and security.

Fiji has been continually deploying peacekeepers around the world for more than 40 years. Some 40,000 Fijians have served as United Nations peacekeepers. Approximately 70 Fijian peacekeepers have made the ultimate sacrifice; that is an outsize contribution by our country. We are proud of our service, and we remember and cherish those Fijians fallen in the service of peace across the world. We remain as committed as ever to being of service to the United Nations through peacekeeping well into the future.

Since 2018, Fiji has embarked on a peacekeeping action plan to fundamentally transform the training of its peacekeepers. We have sought the assistance of our neighbours New Zealand and Australia and have expanded relations with China, India, Malaysia and the United States of America. We are deeply thankful for that support. With the support of the Government of Australia, Fiji is constructing a peacekeeping centre that will be used to train future peacekeepers in Fiji. We intend to open that centre to other small island Pacific States, so that they, too, can participate in United Nations peace operations. Fiji has continued to improve the equipment of its peacekeepers so as to enable them to effectively operate in high-risk security environments.

Fiji reaffirms its commitment to United Nations peacekeeping and to the Action for Peace Plus initiative.

I thank you very much once again, Mr. President, for having convened this important debate.

Annex 32

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Germany to the United Nations

This year as in previous years, we have already witnessed a large number of attacks on United Nations peacekeeping missions. They are horrifying in both their number and brutality, and peacekeepers therefore too often pay the ultimate price. Germany condemns all attacks on peacekeeping missions and underlines that they may constitute war crimes under international law.

As a consequence, this open debate is the third event in a few weeks on this very important topic with a significant impact on discussions about the future of peacekeeping: the safety and the security of our civilian and uniformed peacekeepers deployed abroad to create and enhance peace and security on behalf of the United Nations.

Many aspects of today's discussion are already embedded in and implemented by the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative that Secretary-General Guterres launched three years ago. We recently celebrated its anniversary, and the Secretariat initiated its evolutionary development into the A4P+. Germany is a strong supporter of the A4P and has contributed to its implementation through various activities — both bilaterally and within the United Nations framework.

In that connection, I would like to concentrate on four aspects.

First, modern technology can make a difference. Germany has a large contingent in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), one of the most challenging ongoing peacekeeping missions. Germany promotes the safety and security of all peacekeepers deployed alongside or in the vicinity of the German contingent by offering unique high-end capabilities to protect all Mission personnel. Our use of cutting-edge technology is not limited to MINUSMA; remaining at the forefront of technology is also a key concern for my country. Germany is in close and continuous dialogue with the Mission and the Secretariat in order to enhance existing capabilities with a view to ensuring safety and security.

Secondly, we must enhance training and capacity-building. We recognize the efforts of the United Nations and troop- and police-contributing countries to improve safety and security by enhancing the performance of their units. We very much support those efforts, including by providing predeployment training for police, civilian and military personnel and by dispatching mobile training teams to interested troop-contributing countries. In order to avoid duplication and to streamline bilateral efforts, the United Nations has introduced the Light Coordination Mechanism, through which the offers of the supporting nations are being harmonized with the needs of the supported countries. We strongly believe in the value of the Mechanism and encourage all troop- and police-contributing countries to make full use of it, as it is an important step to enhance the capabilities and capacities of all troop- and police-contributing countries.

Thirdly, we must strengthen the women and peace and security agenda. Sustainable peace can only be achieved when women are fully, equally and meaningfully represented at all levels and at all stages of peace processes. That includes their full, equal and meaningful participation in peace operations. Furthermore, gender needs to be considered in all phases of mission planning, implementation and assessment. Ultimately, that will also enhance the safety and security of missions and their peacekeepers.

Finally, we must provide the best available medical support. Even though we all try our best to prevent accidents and attacks, they still occur and will continue to do so. It is therefore of the utmost importance to ensure that missions are capable of providing the best medical support to our peacekeepers at all times. That requires both effective United Nations policies and tailored capabilities on the ground. The German military medical service is well known for its very high standards, and we will continue to provide training, share expertise and build the capacities of Member States and their peacekeepers.

Member States and the Secretariat have made significant efforts in order to achieve real progress in these and all other aspects mentioned today. Nevertheless, Germany is convinced that more needs to be done to translate commitments into concrete action and decrease the number of casualties even further. That is why Germany will be a participant in the recently established Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers. We are very much looking forward to the Group's first meetings and to contributing to the discussion in order to achieve tangible results for the benefit of the peacekeepers on the ground.

Annex 33

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Guatemala to the United Nations

Guatemala thanks the delegation of the People's Republic of China, in its capacity as President of the Security Council during the month of May, for convening this open debate on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers" via video-teleconference. We also thank all the briefers for their presentations and welcome the circulation of the concept note (S/2021/432, annex), which will contribute to the deliberations during this open debate.

Guatemala welcomes any initiative that seeks to bolster the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel and contribute to improving peacekeeping operations, in line with the full implementation of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative, A4P+ and those established by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly (C-34). Guatemala takes this opportunity to reiterate its position that the C-34 is the main forum mandated by the General Assembly to discuss and analyse all matters related to United Nations peacekeeping operations.

The Security Council has already adopted unanimous resolutions on the safety and security of peacekeepers. These cover areas such as training, health, technology and partnerships, including strengthening training systems, improving health security and relief capabilities, requiring peacekeeping missions to enhance communication with host countries, building mutual trust, improving the level of applied technology and committing to taking various measures to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Indeed, the primary responsibility for the security and protection of United Nations peacekeeping personnel and assets rests with the host Government. That responsibility flows from the Government's inherent function of maintaining law and order and protecting persons and property within its jurisdiction, as well as from the special responsibility enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Guatemala also recognizes the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on peacekeeping operations and the work that the Secretariat has done to adopt rapid measures to adjust the Organization's work to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

Guatemala notes with deep concern the increasing frequency of attacks against, and the killing of, peacekeepers. My delegation therefore considers that the United Nations and its States Members must improve their ability to adapt to the real needs on the ground and take the necessary measures to operate safely in dangerous environments.

Likewise, the information received from missions leads to the conclusion that, in many cases, physical protection is lacking — even in well-established bases — and that the sensors, doors, walls and bunkers in camps are outdated, inadequate and sometimes inefficient. It is important to improve the protective equipment of peacekeeping personnel by providing armoured vests and helmets, for example, to replace those that have expired.

Guatemala welcomes that the Security Council requested that the Secretariat instruct all peacekeeping missions to systematically document violations of status-of-forces agreements, with the leaders of those missions using such information to monitor and resolve risks to the safety and security of peacekeepers, as necessary.

It is crucial to continue making efforts to enhance operational health support, including through the establishment of well-defined practical medical standards for

peacekeeping operations. That includes addressing the lack of air assets, considering its direct impact on the ability to ensure a medical response that can provide reliable care, in line with the 10-1-2 principle, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, during the life of the mission, specifically through casualty and medical evacuation.

We believe that the rules of engagement should be reviewed continuously before our Blue Helmets are deployed, in order to implement the mandate without unnecessarily risking their safety and security in the face of emerging threats.

Finally, Guatemala welcomes the various efforts being made by the Secretariat in order to speed up the vaccination process against COVID-19. This process is of particular importance for the Organization itself if it is to comply with the provisions of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Guatemala also welcomes the initiative of the Chinese delegation, together with Brazil, Indonesia and Rwanda, for the creation for the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers as an important space to discuss and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Annex 34**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires of Indonesia to the United Nations, Mohammad Kurniadi Koba**

Let me begin by thanking China for convening this open debate on the critical topic of the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers, who are deployed to save lives and advance peace. The environment where they are deployed has become more complex and dangerous, which put their lives continuously at risk. The recent increase in the number of attacks against peacekeepers shows how dangerous the peacekeeping environment is.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has also compounded the challenges faced by peacekeeping missions and peacekeepers in discharging their mandates. We commend the continued work and dedication of peacekeepers despite this difficult situation.

In that regard, let me share the following points.

First, improving the safety and security of peacekeepers is a shared responsibility of all peacekeeping stakeholders. While host States have the primary responsibility to ensure the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers, the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat must play a role.

We already have a solid policy framework, including resolution 2518 (2020), the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations of the General Assembly report and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations of the Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative. The recently launched A4P+ also puts special emphasis on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers, which includes promoting accountability to peacekeepers. We need to redouble our efforts to implement those frameworks.

As a major troop- and police-contributing country, Indonesia attaches great importance to the safety and security of peacekeepers. Recently, Indonesia — together with Brazil, China and Rwanda — established the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers. The Group is a dedicated informal forum to support efforts to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Secondly, a comprehensive approach is needed to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers. That entails ensuring peacekeepers are properly trained and well equipped. Both predeployment and in-mission trainings are crucial to prepare peacekeepers to carry out their mandated tasks more effectively and to improve their safety and security.

Equally important for the safety and security of peacekeepers are efforts to improve peacekeeping intelligence and situational awareness, strategic communication and community engagement, the use of technology and addressing occupational and safety hazards. We underline the need for the application and sharing of emerging technologies in order to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Missions must also be supported with adequate medical facilities, including for medical and casualty evacuation. It is therefore critical that peacekeeping missions be provided with sufficient financial resources.

In line with resolution 2538 (2020), particular attention must also be given to ensure the safety and security of women peacekeepers, including by providing a safe and conducive environment.

In order to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, peacekeeping missions must continue to adapt. As the front-line workers for peace and humanity, all peacekeepers must be given priority access to vaccines. We welcome the efforts by the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries (TPCCs) and other stakeholders to provide vaccines for peacekeepers and look forward to further progress in that endeavour.

Thirdly, we must ensure accountability to peacekeepers by bringing perpetrators of crimes against peacekeepers to justice. Investigating and prosecuting them is also critical for deterring further attacks. We welcome some progress in that regard but call for greater efforts. We must help host States enhance their investigation and prosecution capacities, including through programmatic funding. In that connection, we call on the Working Group on Accountability for Serious Crimes against Peacekeepers to continue its work and provide updates to TPCCs on a regular basis.

In conclusion, Indonesia would like to reiterate its strong commitment to collective efforts to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, who have dedicated their lives and made sacrifices for the cause of peace. Their safety and security must remain our top priority.

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

Italy thanks the Government of the People's Republic of China for organizing this open debate. It subscribes to the statement submitted by the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations, Ambassador Ronaldo Costa Filho, on behalf of the Group for the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (annex 19) and would like to add the following remarks in its national capacity.

On Saturday, we will celebrate the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers. The women and men wearing Blue Helmets represent the backbone of the global peace and security architecture, and we have to pay homage to their sacrifice and dedication.

Their contribution is today more crucial than ever, given the multiple threats to international peace and security, and considering that the pandemic has exacerbated the suffering of the people living in conflict situations and continues to challenge the global peacekeeping architecture.

We commend the exemplary professionalism of our peacekeepers in performing their duties and we mourn the loss of those who have given their lives to protect peace and freedom in conflict-torn countries. To date, more than 4,000 peacekeepers have been killed in action — 52 this year and more than 1,000 since 2011. We must reverse this worrisome trend, and the international community as a whole must assume its collective responsibility to keep the death toll as low as possible.

We firmly believe that providing our Blue Helmets with adequate training and equipment is paramount to enhancing their safety and security and to ensuring that the peacekeeping operations comply with the highest performance standards required of them. Training and capacity-building should not be viewed as one-off activities, but rather as tools to enhance operational effectiveness throughout a mission's life cycle. Training activities should take place both before and after deployment and should be calibrated to the specific context of every mission and tailored to contemporary requirements and threats.

We believe that a steady dialogue between the Secretariat and troop- and police contributing countries (TPCCs), as well as between TPCCs and their own training centres, is essential in order to share experiences and best practices, develop common standards and provide information on training opportunities in different fields.

Partnerships also are crucial in the training sector. We therefore support efforts aimed at enhancing synergies between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union. Further, as a member of the European Union (EU), Italy welcomes EU cooperation with the United Nations to this end.

As the first Western European and Others Group police- and troop-contributing country, Italy holds the safety and security of peacekeepers and of the civilian populations they are mandated to protect to be of utmost concern. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping and Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiatives, our country is deeply engaged in devising training activities. Over recent years, our military training centres have provided specialized training and capacity-building to more than 10,000 military and police officers from more than a hundred countries and from several international organizations. We are proud of the successful cooperation that is in place between the Centre of Excellence for Stability Police Units in Vicenza and the United Nations Department of Peace Operations. These targeted training activities have become increasingly relevant in the light of the growing

and indiscriminate use of landmines, explosive remnants of war and improvised explosive devices, which pose serious threats to civilians, humanitarian workers and peacekeeping personnel in conflict-afflicted and post-conflict areas.

Providing peacekeepers with adequate equipment is as important as training. Peacekeeping missions must be able to proactively adapt to and cope with the multiple challenges posed by technological development. Although technology might be a double-edged sword, it is key to enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers. The successful use of uncrewed aerial vehicles in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which have effectively and efficiently improved the gathering of information and provided enhanced situational awareness to the Mission's peacekeepers, is a clear reminder of the tangible benefits of technology and advanced equipment. In this vein, Italy regularly pledges such valuable units and assets to the United Nations peacekeeping capability readiness system as manoeuvre units, complemented by a basket of niche skill sets and enablers, and utility helicopters.

Last but certainly not least, as they are an essential tool for global peace and security, peacekeeping missions must benefit from sufficient, predictable and sustainable funding. Italy, which is the seventh largest contributor to the peacekeeping budget, will continue to do its part in this respect, in the interest of the safety and security of the United Nations peacekeepers and for the sake of the successful implementation of their mandates.

Annex 36**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations, Ishikane Kimihiro**

I thank the Chinese presidency for convening today's important open debate. At the outset, I would like to pay tribute to all the peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in conducting their missions.

Ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers is a high priority for Japan. I would like to highlight three specific points today: intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR); countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs); and medical capacity.

With regard to ISR, if we are to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, it is essential to enhance the situational awareness of United Nations peace operations by utilizing innovative ISR technologies and integrated analysis and planning. We commend the efforts of the Secretariat to introduce high-end equipment and systems using emerging technologies through partnerships with Member States. We also encourage the Secretariat to continue to institutionalize integrated analysis and planning, including through the implementation of the Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System.

With respect to countering improvised explosive devices, IEDs pose a serious threat to several United Nations peace operations, especially in Mali, Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Adequate training and capacity-building on counter-IED and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) should be provided to police- and troop-contributing countries as well as to host State authorities. In this regard, we highly value the role of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS).

With regard to medical capacity, improving the medical capacities of field missions is also critical. We urge the Secretariat to continue to hold and develop relevant medical training courses, keep an adequate posture for medical and casualty evacuation, and make necessary medical expertise available to peace operations through the telemedicine system, in accordance with the 0-10-1-2 concept. In addition, we encourage troop- and police-contributing countries to ensure that their peacekeepers have undergone the relevant training courses and are equipped with the necessary medical kits.

To support the efforts of the troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat in these areas, Japan recently made a contribution of \$2.8 million to the training and capacity-building programmes of the United Nations C4ISR Academy for Peace Operations as well as the United Nations telemedicine project under the Triangular Partnership Programme.

Japan also decided to contribute more than \$4 million to UNMAS for enhancing the counter-IED and EOD capabilities of the Somali Police Force in order to provide a safer environment for African Union and United Nations peace operations as well as for the people of Somalia. Japan stands ready to continue its efforts aimed at enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Annex 37**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan to the United Nations**

I commend the Permanent Mission of China for focusing on the need to adopt urgent measures to ensure the safety of United Nations Blue Helmets as they contribute to peace and security across the globe. It is tragic that as from January this year, as many as 52 United Nations peacekeepers have been killed, who have been added to the thousands who have been killed over the years. Kazakhstan honours them all for their noble sacrifice for the cause of peace.

Kazakhstan supports the efforts undertaken by the United Nations Secretariat to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping activities. In particular, Kazakhstan supported the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. My delegation fully endorses the A4P priorities for 2021-2023, and the subsequent three resolutions of the Council — resolutions 2436 (2018), 2518 (2020) and 2538 (2020) — which point the way forward. In this regard, my delegation offers a few key recommendations to consider with respect to peacekeeping in conflict zones, which today show a wide range of dangers that must be addressed.

The A4P initiative and the three resolutions must be implemented in the context of the Secretary-General's management and development reforms so as to guarantee greater operational cooperation across the United Nations system and its peacekeeping missions. Accordingly, it is imperative that leadership, administration, logistics and decision-making be streamlined for swift action.

We need to rethink achievable mandates, mission size, required capabilities, operating procedures, mission base security, and predeployment and in-mission training for troops facing armed groups, terrorists, organized crime, and political and criminal exploitation, among other threats.

Acts of violence are taking place against the backdrop of the high level of health risk associated with the coronavirus disease pandemic. Therefore, to reduce fatalities, we need adequate relief measures, trained experts and instantly available supplies, personal protection equipment, ambulances and level 1 hospitals for acute trauma and fatal emergencies, as well as prolonged conditions. Prompt medical evacuation facilities are therefore also critical.

The very high-risk settings call for state-of-the-art early-warning systems, informational awareness, intelligence gathering and coordination between field missions, Headquarters, troop-contributing countries, regional organizations and host countries.

Strengthening peacekeeping missions with adequate technologies and assets to counteract violence from insurgents, especially with appropriate vehicles for difficult terrain, night-vision capability, and special uniforms and kits, is essential. Peacekeepers must be prepared to act in the unfamiliar settings of jungles and face the tactics of guerrilla warfare, improvised explosive devices and suicide bombings.

Training and security sector reform must be imparted for military and police forces and the national security apparatus of the host country to be prepared, with the establishment of clear agreements and acceptance of the responsibility to protect United Nations personnel and citizens alike. Further, more women must be recruited into the military, police and civilian components of missions for greater conflict prevention at all levels.

Predictable long-term funding for comprehensive security, political, military and humanitarian aspects must be guaranteed. At the same time, we need to strengthen the security-development nexus for greater ongoing stability in the host country, through poverty reduction, job creation, and health and welfare services.

Kazakhstan considers peacekeeping to be an important component of its policy to strengthen international and regional security. As the leading country in Central Asia — and the second among the post-Soviet countries — to do so, Kazakhstan has, since 2018, deployed peacekeeping units comprising more than 500 peacekeepers, including a woman staff officer, to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). We express our gratitude to the United Nations Secretariat and India for supporting our peacekeeping initiatives, in particular our unique co-deployment within the UNIFIL. We will continue to field larger units with support from other partner countries and work on possible independent deployment in the future.

Furthermore, as one of the youngest troop-contributing countries, Kazakhstan has sent a total of 33 men and women as military observers to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire. Through our contribution and experience, we have been able to prove that the competent predeployment training of troops, reinforcement of their moral and psychological strength, execution of strict standards-of-performance evaluation, together with coordination of rotations, are some of the key ways to protect peacekeepers.

To ensure that our troops are well qualified, Kazakhstan has established KAZCENT, our Partnership for Peace Training Centre, which was designed to conform with international norms and provide United Nations certified courses. The country will continue its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping operations by sending specialized peacekeeping units that have been pledged to the peacekeeping capability readiness system.

As a strong ally and supporter of the United Nations, Kazakhstan is deeply committed to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We intend to work closely with the United Nations and the international community as a whole to support shared efforts to maintain peace and security throughout the world.

Annex 38**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations, Amal Mudallali**

We congratulate China on assuming the presidency of the Security Council this month and thank Viet Nam for its productive presidency during the month of April.

Peacekeeping operations continue to play an essential role in maintaining international peace and security around the world. They represent an indispensable tool of the international community to mitigate regional crises and curb the evolution of tensions into wars.

With the multiplicity of challenges faced by peacekeepers, ensuring and continuously improving their safety and security is of great importance. The threats and dangers are numerous and require the concerted efforts of the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries, financial contributors and host countries to address them.

Enhanced capacity-building through training and provision of equipment and other resources to improve the awareness and preparedness of forces in responding to the challenges presented by complex situations and dangerous environments, whether human-made or nature-made, are some of the different forms of improving the safety and security of peacekeepers. Moreover, training and capacity-building of peacekeepers prior to and during their deployment play key roles in enhancing their safety and security.

The work of peacekeepers did not cease despite the mounting security challenges that they are facing on several terrains, and, recently, with the health threat posed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 on peacekeepers' safety remains a point of concern for all States Members of the United Nations.

We commend the Secretariat for the measures it has undertaken in the context of protecting peacekeepers from COVID-19 and treating those who have become infected. Such measures have significantly limited the numbers of fatalities and contagion among peacekeepers and host communities. We pay tribute to the peacekeepers, both uniformed personnel and civilians, who have lost their lives to COVID-19 while in service. Lebanon also pays tribute to those who have lost their lives in the field, commends the efforts that have contributed to the continued decrease in fatalities and condemns all attacks on peacekeepers. We stress that even one fatality is too many.

The explosion that hit Beirut on 4 August last year took its toll on one of the Maritime Task Force ships of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and was a testament to the mission's readiness and preparedness in case of emergency. A total of 23 UNIFIL peacekeepers from Bangladesh were admitted to hospitals in the aftermath of the explosion. UNIFIL's crisis response was a proof of its high state of readiness, which was invaluable for the rapid evacuation and medical treatment of the injured personnel.

As a country that is hosting peacekeepers, Lebanon is committed to the safety and security of the UNIFIL mission as a whole. Lebanon is also committed to abiding by resolution 2518 (2020) on capacity-building and the safety and security of peacekeepers. Lebanon condemns all attacks against UNIFIL personnel, and Lebanese authorities will act swiftly to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The relationship between UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities is very strong, and Lebanon is eager to strengthen it further through capacity-building programmes

and continuous cooperation and coordination on the ground. Lebanon is extremely thankful to UNIFIL's leadership and staff for their unstinting dedication, and it commends the strong and steady cooperation that exists between UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities. We also wish to thank the troop-contributing countries for their long-standing support and unwavering commitment, especially in the challenging times that Lebanon is experiencing. Finally, Lebanon reiterates its full commitment to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) in its entirety and to preserving the safety and security of UNIFIL's personnel.

Annex 39**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations, Syed Mohamad Hasrin Aidid**

Peacekeeping operations remain one of the core components of the work of the United Nations. To this day, the Blue Helmets continue to be globally recognized as synonymous with the Organization.

Over the years, the nature of United Nations peacekeeping operations has continued to evolve. Indeed, it has become more complex and challenging. To be effective, United Nations peacekeeping operations have to adapt to the challenges that arise.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has greatly tested the resolve and robustness of United Nations peacekeeping operations in the field. We all could certainly learn lessons from how peacekeeping operations conducted themselves in a pandemic situation.

The safety and security of peacekeepers is indispensable for effective United Nations peacekeeping operations. Today's debate is timely indeed, as we work towards improving the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations globally.

Malaysia believes that continuous engagement with all relevant stakeholders on the safety and security of peacekeepers is pivotal in searching for ways and means to improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. For this reason, Malaysia is pleased to be part of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers that was launched recently.

Malaysia believes that the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us a few important lessons.

First, to be effective, our peacekeepers need to be well protected to carry out their mandates effectively. In this context, they have to be equipped with the necessary tools, such as adequate protective equipment, including face masks, gloves and face shields. As front-liners, those already in the field should be vaccinated fully as a matter of priority. We must also ensure that new peacekeepers are fully vaccinated before their deployment.

Secondly, the pandemic has also underscored the importance of training. Our peacekeepers must be trained appropriately and adequately to operate in a pandemic situation. They require the necessary skills on how to interact with stakeholders while observing safety protocols and practicing social distance. They also need to be trained in coping with mental-health issues.

It is also important that peacekeepers continue to receive targeted and constant training in traditional areas of peacekeeping. Adequate and up-to-date training with the assistance of the United Nations is critical, particularly in areas such as developing relevant training materials, predeployment training, countering improvised explosive devices, health and basic first aid.

Thirdly, the pandemic has also taught us the need to respond faster and safer. In this context, peacekeepers should be able to rely on new technologies in gathering vital information in areas of operation. With better knowledge of the situation on the ground, we would be able to significantly improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, enhance field support and facilitate better substantive mandate implementation.

Malaysian peacekeepers — men and women — are deployed in four United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world. My country takes pride in and

remains committed to our contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

Let me conclude by reiterating Malaysia's full support and readiness to work closely with all stakeholders in ensuring that our peacekeeping operations are better fit for purpose.

Annex 40**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations**

We thank you for the timely organization of this open debate, which focuses on one of the pillars of the United Nations. Peacekeeping operations have played a pivotal role in the maintenance of international peace and security and continue to form an integral part of multilateral action. It remains our responsibility to close remaining gaps in peacekeeping operations, and this also applies to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

We remain concerned at the rising challenges being faced by peacekeepers in the fulfilment of their mandates. The rise of attacks against peacekeepers is worrying and has led us to rethink what tools are necessary to mitigate these challenges. Terrorist attacks, improvised explosive devices (IEDs), climate change and the use of emerging technologies have forced peacekeeping operations to adapt to these new realities in order to ensure not only the fulfilment of their mandates, but also the safety and security of peacekeepers. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has also created new challenges, and the vaccination drive for peacekeepers on the ground will help mitigate the worst impacts of the pandemic and ensure the continuity of operations.

The continued safety and security of peacekeepers demand both a lot of preparatory work before deployment and ensuring that the right tools, equipment and strategies are in place during the actual operations. This includes the use of new technologies, the provision of up-to-date equipment and the evaluation of mission standards so they can meet new challenges. Continuous training is also key to ensuring that new standards are implemented across the board. The relationship between the host communities and the peacekeeping mission is another vital component.

We commend the results achieved through the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, of which the safety and security of peacekeepers are a main component. Positive results have been recorded in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations. Hopefully, this will also ring true with the renewed Action for Peacekeeping Plus.

The importance of policy guidance remains a prerequisite for the fulfilment of any United Nations -sanctioned mandate. Effective action and implementation of resolution 2518 (2020), on the safety and security of peacekeepers, remain essential. This resolution includes a number of measures that are crucial to ensuring the safety of peacekeepers, including the responsibilities of host countries, the importance of timely investigations into and prosecutions of attacks on peacekeepers, increased capacities for missions to deal with emerging threats, and the setting-up of gender-sensitive working environments. It also underscores the complexity involved in ensuring the safety of peacekeepers and in rising to the challenge to meet emerging threats. The Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations plays an important role in providing policy guidance, and the safety and security of peacekeepers consistently feature as an important pillar in its annual reports.

Taking stock of the needs of peacekeeping operations and conducting a thorough analysis of the new emerging threats to the implementation of peacekeeping mandates is important work that we need to encourage and support. However, what is also needed is continued dynamism among the United Nations system, troop- and police-contributing countries and other stakeholders. This is the only way that we can ensure that peacekeeping missions succeed in fulfilling their mandates and keeping peacekeepers safe. Clear examples include the capacity-building involved in combating emerging threats such as the use of IEDs and the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitates a collaborative effort among all stakeholders involved. The

provision of equipment, capacity-building, renewed strategies and the mastering of emerging technologies can be achieved only through a system-wide effort that puts at its core the safety and security of all peacekeepers and the missions they represent.

Malta remains committed to supporting all peacekeeping operations and all measures that contribute to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Annex 41**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations**

[Original; French]

First of all, I would like to thank China for organizing this open debate of the Security Council on improving the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel and for its leadership on this priority issue for Morocco. I also thank the various speakers for their efforts to improve the safety and security of deployed personnel.

As a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, Morocco naturally attaches particular importance to enhancing the safety and security of the troops it deploys, especially since we continue to be the subject of malicious attacks in our various theatres of engagement. The most recent victim we mourn fell in January 2020, when a master corporal was attacked in his convoy by an armed group in the Central African Republic.

Peacekeeping, which is constantly evolving, has experienced a sharp increase in risks, specifically with the heightened number of asymmetrical attacks against Blue Helmets, the fight against terrorism in certain mission areas and disinformation campaigns targeting the image of the United Nations. Facing up to all that calls for ongoing, robust mobilization.

In that regard, I would like to commend the work of the Secretariat, under the leadership of the Secretary-General, for all its efforts, especially the launch of the Action Plan to Improve the Security of Peacekeepers and the Action for Peacekeeping initiative, which attaches particular importance to that challenge.

Morocco also commends the swiftness with which concrete measures have been put in place to combat the coronavirus disease pandemic, which has saved millions of lives, including among local populations. The vaccination campaign under way for uniformed personnel is another example of concrete steps taken by the Secretariat, with the support of Member States, to improve the safety and security of Blue Helmets.

We are aware of the fact that improving the safety and security of personnel is a shared responsibility for the host of peacekeeping actors; hence the importance of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34), which every year draws up concrete recommendations, including on improving safety and security for personnel. Moreover, it brings together all key actors, including troop contributors, the members of the Security Council and those providing financing, along with the participation of representatives of the Secretariat.

In addition, that improvement depends upon a multitude of factors, which are set out in detail in the latest draft report of the C-34 (A/AC.121/2021/L.3) as well as in resolution 2518 (2000), adopted in the year 2000. On the basis of those two documents and its experience with United Nations peacekeeping, Morocco would like to share the following observations and recommendations.

The nature of the mandates has a significant impact on the safety and security of our troops. In order to be able to perform their duties in secure conditions, troops need clear guidance as well as realistic mandates that are supported by adequate human and financial resources

Improving medical capacities as well as medical evacuation procedures must be a priority. It is unfortunate that our Blue Helmets do not always enjoy appropriate and accessible medical facilities.

Appropriate and targeted training focused on the specific needs of each operation is essential. Predeployment training must be complemented by in-mission training using updated materials. Morocco is actively engaged with the Secretariat in updating and developing various training materials. As part of the triangular partnership programme, Morocco has hosted various training workshops and sessions, mainly targeting Francophone police and troop contributors.

Combating impunity for the perpetrators of attacks against the United Nations is also a key element. It is crucial that host countries legally prosecute those responsible for such crimes. In certain conflict situations, at the request of the host country, the United Nations could be called upon to support the strengthening of State institutions. The support provided to the authorities of the Central African Republic is a good example of best practice.

Another aspect that is frequently mentioned is the importance of winning hearts and minds among the local populations we are mandated to protect. That is all the more important at a time of growing use of social networks to facilitate disinformation campaigns. We strongly condemn such campaigns targeting the entirety of United Nations staff. In addition, quick-impact projects carried out by contingents with a view to improving conditions for populations makes it possible for troops to be better accepted by local populations.

In conclusion, Morocco pays heartfelt tribute to all those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the name of peace and in service of the United Nations flag. Despite the risks and difficulties, Morocco is fully committed to supporting United Nations peacekeeping, which continues often to be the sole bulwark against the disastrous consequences of conflict.

Annex 42**Statement by Permanent Representative of Nepal to the United Nations, Amrit Bahadur Rai**

I begin by thanking the presidency of the People's Republic of China for convening today's open debate on the theme "United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers".

Peacekeeping has remained the most visible conflict management tool at the disposal of the United Nations. Over the years, it has evolved as a multidimensional global undertaking. Its mandate has been expanding, from the supervision of ceasefires to the protection of civilians, community engagement and the advancement of a political solution. United Nations Blue Helmets have continued to build and maintain peace in conflict environments in different regions.

Threats to peacekeepers' safety and security are growing in today's world. Beyond malicious threats, peacekeepers are also prone to accidents and health hazards. The current pandemic has exacerbated the pre-existing fragilities experienced by peacekeepers.

The safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers is essential for mandate delivery. It is sad to see that peacekeepers are targeted and attacked asymmetrically. Our common responsibilities lie in protecting Blue Helmets operating in volatile and active conflict environments.

As a major troop- and police-contributing country, Nepal appreciates the initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers, including through the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4) initiative and the A4P Plus. However, we must acknowledge that there are gaps; and we should address those gaps while integrating safety and security perspectives in all stages of planning, implementation, reporting and analysis.

We must not view the safety and security of peacekeepers as a stand-alone agenda. The mission mandate, management, available technologies, medical facilities and leadership are all intrinsically related to it. Therefore, a safety and security approach to strategic decision-making is critical for achieving a mission's objectives. That warrants system-wide coherence and cooperation among the Security Council, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, other relevant departments, troop- and police-contributing countries and host countries.

Nowadays, peacekeeping missions are mandated to conduct sensitive business including the protection of civilians and the promotion of human rights. For that, situational awareness and intelligence are the critical aspects so as to undertake threat assessments and devise response strategies. Missions should be adequately resourced to keep peacekeepers up to date.

Malicious acts against peacekeepers are intolerable. Perpetrators of attacks against United Nations peacekeepers must be held accountable under international law. Due legal and political actions need to be taken.

The graph of United Nations peacekeeping fatalities keeps reminding us that our efforts in ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers have not been enough. Peacekeepers have been losing their lives due to hostile acts, accidents and illness, among other things.

We appreciate the efforts of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to immunize troops and police against the coronavirus disease. Adequate safety measures must continue to be in place along with vaccination. In that regard,

Nepal expresses its commitment to vaccinating all its troops before their deployment to missions.

This pandemic has once again proved that the health safety of peacekeepers should be given due importance. Adequate health services with capacity for trauma medicine, emergency evacuation, nutrition and sanitation must be ensured for peacekeepers, while health emergency response strategies should be in place to cope the pandemic.

United Nations peacekeeping has been a hope for global peace and security. Its mandate and objectives will remain unfulfilled if peacekeepers' safety and security are not safeguarded. Our collective efforts should be aimed at mitigating risks and enabling peacekeepers to perform in a safe and secured environment, with high morale.

In conclusion, peacekeeping missions should be strengthened holistically to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers so that they can secure peace on the ground and deliver the mandates of the mission. Nepal remains committed to continue contributing to the noble goals of United Nations peace operations.

Annex 43**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Netherlands to the United Nations**

We would like to thank China for organizing today's debate. The safety and security of peacekeepers is a matter of great importance, and we are therefore pleased to see it on today's agenda.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands fully aligns itself with the joint statement submitted on behalf of the Group of Friends for the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (annex 19).

Peacekeeping operations are an effective instrument in preserving international peace and security. However, over the past 70 years, the operating environment for United Nations peacekeepers has changed significantly. The intensity and complexity of conflict has increased, and various security factors are posing threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands expresses its appreciation to all peacekeepers who have been, and continue to be, deployed to maintain peace. Their safety and security is a shared responsibility of the international community — as for without them, operations could not and cannot be carried out. It is for that reason that enhancing the safety and security of peacekeepers is paramount. Moreover, increased safety and security will result in greater effectiveness and performance of peacekeeping operations in the carrying out of mission-mandate tasks such as the protection of civilians.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore appreciates the efforts of the Secretary-General through Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative to give renewed impetus to the safety and security of peacekeepers, among other things. In this statement, we wish to highlight three areas of action the Kingdom of the Netherlands considers critical to increase the safety and security of peacekeepers.

First, with regard to technology and increasing situational awareness, in your much-valued concept note (S/2021/432, annex), Mr. President, it is emphasized that enhancing missions' early-warning and emergency response capabilities is essential. In addition, it is stated that new technologies can have a significant impact on the security of peacekeepers. We fully concur with that and believe that an increase in capabilities and instruments for data gathering, integrated analyses and information dissemination could be a great step forward in improving peacekeepers' safety and security.

Technologies such as big data radio mining and the Situational Awareness Geospatial Enterprise allow missions to increase their situational awareness and develop data-driven activities. The collection and analysis of data and information, culminating in peacekeeping intelligence, enables information-driven operations that will enhance safety and security as well as mission performance. Over the past years, the Secretariat has developed valuable policies on matters relating to peacekeeping intelligence and information gathering and analysis, to which the Kingdom of the Netherlands gladly contributed. Further incorporation of those policies in predeployment training would allow for information-driven peacekeeping operations to further mature.

Secondly, on improving capabilities and mindsets through relevant predeployment and specialized training, appropriate and targeted training and capacity-building is an effective way to ensure that peacekeepers are adequately trained and equipped to ensure their own safety and security. We are pleased that the Secretary-General has included that element in the Action for Peacekeeping Plus

initiative, highlighting the need for specialized training in the field of improvised explosive device (IED) threat-mitigation and counter-IED training. Moreover, training on basic first aid, peacekeeping intelligence and gender-specific risk considerations is equally important. Recently, the Netherlands contributed to that plethora of specialized training by developing the Buddy First Aid Course app and the United Nations COVID-19 Response app.

We also wish to highlight the continuous relevance of the Light Coordination Mechanism (LCM), developed by the Secretariat. Through the mechanism, training supply and training demand can be orchestrated and matched. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is a proud member of the LCM's core group and encourages all Member States to use the mechanism to their advantage.

Thirdly, on integrated planning, in the Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative the Secretary-General acknowledges that inadequate integration undermines our political goals, our protection efforts and our efforts to strengthen the safety, security and performance of peacekeepers. The Comprehensive Planning and Performance Assessment System is an important step towards enhanced integration, yet more should be done to strengthen integrated planning and reporting between the uniformed and civilian sides. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is willing to participate in discussions on how to achieve that and will facilitate further debate on the topic during the preparatory conference it is organizing together with Pakistan on 25 and 26 October. We would greatly value and appreciate all Member States' participation.

Lastly, the coronavirus disease pandemic has explicitly demonstrated the vulnerability and indispensability of good health. It is irrefutable that, at the core of safety and security for peacekeepers, lies basic medical preparedness, casualty and medical evacuation and the provision of medical and hospital coverage at all levels. We commend the improvement in health and medical support that has been achieved over the years and believe that it can be further strengthened and developed.

Annex 44**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Munir Akram**

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. Today's discussion is extremely important. Conflicts have become more complex. Threats to peacekeepers have escalated. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has added another layer of threat to peacekeepers as well as to the general population.

Our decision to support predeployment and in-theatre immunization of peacekeepers seeks to protect both Blue Helmets and local communities against the COVID-19 pandemic. To demonstrate our commitment, we have already started to administer vaccines to our contingents in the field.

Taking this opportunity, we would also like to appreciate the Secretariat's continued efforts to mitigate pandemic-related threats, especially its decision to introduce field-based precautionary measures and facilitate the vaccination process for uniformed personnel. Our peacekeepers are indeed the front-line United Nations workers, and their safety and security should be accorded high priority. This should be part of our comprehensive approach to ensuring equitable global access to COVID-19 vaccines. Accelerating the equitable roll-out of vaccines will advance the peace and development agenda, especially in conflict-affected countries.

Pakistan also appreciates the introduction of accountability for peacekeepers as a central theme in Action for Peacekeeping Plus initiative. It reflects a progressive approach that seeks to strengthen the legal framework of safety and security. The commitment to prosecute crimes against peacekeepers is a step in the right direction. It affirms Pakistan's consistent view that safety and security should be promoted in a holistic manner giving due consideration to technical as well as legal and political aspects.

Keeping in view the focus of today's meeting, I would like to advance the following recommendations.

First, as part of the recently launched Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, Pakistan supports all efforts aimed at elevating the political visibility of safety and security and placing it at the centre of robust peacekeeping.

Secondly, a capability-driven approach is needed to shape an effective response to the existing threat environment. Specialized capabilities, such as action to counter improvised explosive devices and mines, combined with critical enablers, including multi-role engineers, aviation and medical units, contribute to personnel security. They should be given priority during the force-generation process. Similarly, the discipline, morale, training and operational experience of peacekeeping contingents could have a significant impact on the security environment.

Thirdly, the gaps between mandates and resources must be addressed. Currently, expectations outstrip resources, exposing peacekeepers to undue risks. Similarly, inadequate equipment has a direct bearing on the likelihood of casualties among peacekeepers. The remedy lies in a two-pronged approach — devising clear, focused and achievable mandates on the one hand, and allocating adequate budgetary resources and equipment, on the other.

The pressing financial situation of United Nations peacekeeping demands that Member States pay their financial obligations in full, on time and without conditions. Delayed payments hamper the deployment of new units, depriving

missions of critical capabilities such as aviation support, medical equipment and explosive ordnance disposal.

Given the nature of recent attacks on United Nations peacekeepers, mine-protected vehicles have become a vital asset in some peacekeeping missions.

Tactical intelligence is another key tool to improve situational awareness and prevent casualties. However, it must conform with the requirements and policies of host countries.

Military units, convoys and long-range patrols should have reliable medical support for first aid and casualty evacuation. Based on most recent assessments, more needs to be done to support troops in improving their emergency medical care practices and in using technology, such as telemedicine, for this purpose.

At the strategic level, ensuring coherence and synergy between the policy and operational levels is crucial. This can be achieved through meaningful triangular consultations and effective feedback between the Security Council, the Secretariat and troop-contributing countries (TCCs).

Fourthly, reaching out to local communities and leveraging strategic communications can help manage expectations and address disinformation and hate speech. To realize these goals, we must continue to innovate and modernize the public communication capabilities of peacekeeping missions. The deployment of Pakistan's all-female engagement team in the Democratic Republic of the Congo reflects our commitment to such endeavours.

We reiterate our suggestion that the Security Council, when authorizing a peacekeeping mission, allocate a certain percentage of the budget to community support projects and other peacebuilding actions.

Fifthly, we should be enhancing training and capacity-building through partnerships. Training improves knowledge, skills and attitudes and builds capacities to manage crises and protect the lives of peacekeepers as well as civilians. Pakistan has hosted several peacekeeping courses for partner countries. We look forward to strengthening this engagement and working with Member States and the Secretariat to enlarge and diversify such training, especially for new TCCs, at the Centre for International Peace and Stability in Islamabad.

Finally, the United Nations must prioritize political solutions to conflicts, as recommended in resolution 2518 (2020) and the 2017 report authored by former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos (Retired) Alberto dos Santos Cruz. Sustainable peace requires a comprehensive approach, from conflict prevention and resolution to peacekeeping, peacebuilding and long-term development.

Over the last six decades, Pakistan has lost 160 of our bravest in United Nations peacekeeping missions — three of them only last year. Pakistan therefore accords the highest priority to the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers and will host, along with the Netherlands, a ministerial meeting in October on safety, security and protection, in preparation for the Seoul conference.

Annex 45

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Philippines to the United Nations, Enrique A. Manalo

Peacekeeping operations remain the flagship programme of the United Nations enterprise. The safety and security of peacekeepers continues to be one of the highest priorities of the Organization.

During the general debate of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations (C-34) in February this year, delegations, including that of the Philippines, reaffirmed their national commitments to the safety and security of peacekeepers and condemned in the strongest terms attacks against United Nations peacekeeping personnel and all acts of violence. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated the complexity of security risks to our peacekeepers.

The 2021 C-34 report, negotiated virtually early this year under extraordinary circumstances, stresses that

“United Nations peacekeepers deployed in deteriorating and complex political and security environments face asymmetrical and complex threats, and have increasingly become a target for hostile actors... It is of critical importance that the Secretariat work closely in consultation with Member States in a transparent manner on the implementation of the Action Plan to Improve the Security of Peacekeepers, within its authority” (*A/75/19, para. 152*).

We appreciate the efforts of China, under its presidency of the Security Council, to convene today’s open debate on “United Nations peacekeeping operations: improving safety and security of peacekeepers”.

The Philippines joined last month the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of Peacekeepers, together with over 50 Member States from all geographical regions. The Group of Friends aims to build a platform for strengthening information-sharing, policy coordination and capacity-building to enhance the safety and security of our peacekeepers in United Nations field missions. This is a timely initiative, given the pandemic context.

The Philippines wishes to submit the following points.

First, on long-term investment and efforts to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, the Philippines reiterates its call for the United Nations to continue its partnership with international development and financial institutions in terms of innovative financing options on peacebuilding and sustaining peace programmes. Whether at the United Nations country team level or through the United Nations-World Bank partnership in crisis-affected settings, such initiatives enhance investments in capacity for conflict prevention and strengthen the link between peace and development actors. This shift towards prevention and partnership strategically contributes to the prospects of strengthening the safety and security of our peacekeepers.

Secondly, on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers as a shared responsibility, the Philippines believes that policy and financial support for intergovernmental platforms that enable peer learning among Member States are key to building resilience in peacekeeping, encouraging constructive dialogues on the challenges in sustaining peace and pursuing strategic partnerships. We encourage greater collaboration between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the United Nations in peace operations, including through the implementation of the Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations, in areas such as the Triangular Partnership

Project, capacity-building, the sharing of best practices and increasing women's participation in peacekeeping.

Thirdly, on the implementation of resolution 2518 (2020), to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers, the Philippines supports the appointment of "an overall focal point for the safety and security of peacekeepers" (*ibid*, para. 156), a new strategic policy recommendation put forward in the 2021 C-34 report. We recommend that the terms of reference of the focal point be discussed between the C-34 members and the Secretariat and approved by the Security Council members.

Fourthly, on the specific actions that must be taken to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers, the Philippines underscores the continued importance of predeployment and in-mission training sessions for our peacekeepers, not only for their safety and security, but also to contribute to the peacekeeping mission's overall performance. There should also be better integration and coordination of efforts across the pillars of peacekeeping missions and United Nations agencies. United Nations peacekeepers should not be left behind in global and local efforts to contain the virus and should be prioritized in health programmes in response to the pandemic.

Finally, the Philippines underscores the importance of the Secretariat accountability system and the need to strengthen risk management and internal controls in the management of peacekeeping budgets to facilitate mandate implementation and increase transparency in peacekeeping operations.

We believe that peacekeeping issues must be discussed in a broader forum in order to respond to the problem of the persistent gap between those who decide on the mandates of peace operations and those who deploy the troops and police for implementation of the mandates.

Finally, the Philippines looks forward to participating in the 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial Conference to be hosted by the Republic of Korea this December, which, we anticipate, will discuss safety and security issues in a post-COVID-19 era.

Annex 46**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Poland to the United Nations**

Poland would like to thank China for organizing this timely and important debate. We also express our appreciation to Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Mr. Atul Khare and Mr. Gilles Michaud for their thought-provoking and informative briefings.

Peacekeeping remains one of the most effective United Nations tools in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. Over the years, the scope of peacekeeping mandates has expanded significantly in response to the changing nature of conflicts. As the daily activities of peacekeepers range from protecting civilians to assisting peacebuilding activities, their central role in the implementation of the sustaining peace agenda needs to be recognized.

United Nations civilian, military and police personnel risk their lives in complex security environments in order to protect the most vulnerable and help countries to navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. On 29 May, we will pay tribute to all the men and women who have served under the United Nations flag and honour the memory of over 4,000 peacekeepers who have lost their lives in the cause of peace. This sacrifice demands a decisive and long-term engagement in improving the safety and security of peacekeepers.

While United Nations peacekeeping is constantly evolving to meet new challenges, stronger preventive measures must follow in order to address new risks and threats. In this vein, Poland reiterates its support for resolution 2518 (2020) and calls for its full implementation. Further efforts are also needed to carry into effect the recommendations of the 2018 Action Plan to Improve the Security of Peacekeepers.

Their protection cannot be safeguarded, however, without a clear understanding of the situation on the ground. Hence, we underscore the need for regular safety and security audits of all deployments and for the systematic documentation of all violations of status-of-forces agreements.

Acknowledging that the safety and security of United Nations peacekeeping personnel require the commitment of all relevant stakeholders, including the Security Council, the Secretariat and host countries, as well as troop- and police-contributing countries, Poland highlights the primary responsibility of host States in this regard. It is crucial that host States facilitate access and freedom of movement for United Nations peacekeepers and their equipment within the established mandate, including for casualty and medical evacuation. Strengthening accountability is another important obligation that rests with host States, and Poland strongly condemns all attacks against United Nations peacekeeping personnel. Although in recent years we have observed a continued decrease in fatalities from acts of violence, we need to ensure that those responsible for attacks on peacekeepers are effectively brought to justice.

Tragically, last year the total number of fatalities increased, reaching 130 persons. Given that illness remains a predominant cause, it is pertinent to enhance the provision of logistical and operational health support, ensure adequate medical facilities and qualified medical personnel, and improve peacekeepers' medical capabilities. Naturally, adjusting the medical conditions of peacekeeping operations to the needs of our times also implies learning from experience of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and addressing the potential risk of future outbreaks of infectious diseases.

It is clear that the pandemic has exposed peacekeepers to additional risks and strained mission resources. Nevertheless, peacekeepers have engaged in conducting public education campaigns about the virus, establishing new health and safety

protocols and supporting local Government responses. Their courage, flexibility and adaptability are an example to follow. Unfortunately, some have paid the highest price for this outstanding commitment.

In this vein, Poland requests the Secretariat to continue its efforts to address security and safety challenges that have arisen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend the timely provision of updated policies and guidelines on the COVID-19 response, such as the COVID-19 Duty Station Medical Capacities Review and the COVID-19 Preparedness Checklist. Nevertheless, the resilience of missions needs to be further strengthened in view of possible health emergencies. In this context, Poland highlights the importance of enhancing health-risk assessments, early-warning and emergency response capabilities. We also underscore the importance of early COVID-19 vaccination for all United Nations peacekeepers in order to protect their safety, security and health and prevent the spread of the virus.

Improving medical standards, force protection and camp defence, as well as addressing persistent security threats posed by improvised explosive devices, are, among others, necessary conditions to strengthen peacekeepers' safety and security. However, adequate operational behaviour and mindset are equally as important.

Hence, Poland would like to highlight the crucial role of enhancing the situational awareness, capacity-building and training of United Nations peacekeeping personnel, including through the provision of solid, mission-specific predeployment training in accordance with United Nations standards. Peacekeepers should be equipped and trained in a way that enhances not only their performance but also their safety and security. In-mission training methodologies need to be regularly updated in order to address new security challenges and operational needs. We need to ensure that personnel are aware of the risks and empowered to take the initiative to deter, prevent and respond to attacks.

We also cannot underestimate the importance of United Nations peacekeeping missions' engagement with local authorities and communities in order to build trust. In this context, Poland underlines the need for adequate strategic communications in peacekeeping in order to counter the anti-United Nations propaganda.

Recognizing that safeguarding United Nations peacekeeping personnel requires coordinated efforts, it is necessary to address their safety and security also within the frameworks of partnerships between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations.

Poland remains a strong advocate of the women and peace and security agenda and endorses all efforts aimed at ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, including in United Nations peacekeeping. Therefore, we cannot stress enough how important it is to take into consideration the needs of women peacekeepers in order to ensure safe and enabling environments in the missions.

In the spirit of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative, we agree that operational performance and the safety and security of peacekeepers are strongly interlinked. It is pivotal that peacekeeping missions evolve their capabilities and systems in order to remain agile and effective. Reviewing and ensuring the uniformity of United Nations standards on training and performance is key in this regard. Furthermore, Poland calls for continued efforts of the Secretariat to develop clear policy and practices in the field of safety and security. In this context, we welcome recently promulgated policies on casualty evacuation.

Finally, the safety and security of peacekeepers are a joint endeavour; only coherent actions at both Headquarters and field levels, supported by concerted political engagement, will allow us to achieve tangible progress in this issue of paramount importance.

Annex 47**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations, Nuno Vaultier Mathias**

Portugal thanks China, in its capacity as President of the Security Council, for organizing this open debate on an issue of the utmost importance. Peacekeeping is one of the most effective tools available to the United Nations in the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. We all know that it comes at a heavy cost, and we would like to pay tribute to all the fallen and injured Blue Helmets and Blue Berets.

Portugal has maintained consistent participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations, and we are currently engaged in several missions. As such, we are well aware that peacekeeping has become more and more demanding, as we face new actors with new approaches in more complex and hostile operational environments. We therefore need to generate efficient capabilities, including specialized capabilities, that enable us to tackle new and emerging threats and ensure both operational success and the safety and security of our peacekeepers.

Knowledge of the country, the conflict, the parts to the conflict and respective modus operandi are essential to enhance safety and security in a peacekeeping operation. Appropriate equipment, making use of technological developments and ensuring the necessary capabilities for medical and casualty evacuation; appropriate training before deployment; and information sharing and lessons learned during induction, training and once deployed to the theatre of operations — all those aspects are vital for peacekeepers to identify and assess threats and to take appropriate measures to improve their situational awareness.

The training of our peacekeepers is a top priority for Portugal. We have in place a holistic approach that includes predeployment, deployment and post-deployment training. Prior to deployment, our peacekeepers undergo a six-month, mission-oriented training programme on peacekeeping operations, rules of engagement, the protection of civilians and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Only thorough and updated training ensures high standards, proper posture and effective performance. We also invest in in-mission training, which gives our contingents the tools to operate in their specific areas of deployment and to work together with the other military and police contingents.

Moreover, when our peacekeepers return home, they go through a six-month regeneration programme. The programme allows for an analysis of the accumulated experience from the field, producing reliable lessons learned that are introduced in subsequent predeployment training.

Let me conclude by assuring the Security Council that the safety and security of peacekeepers will continue to be a priority to Portugal.

Annex 48**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, Cho Hyun**

Let me begin by commending your leadership, Mr. President, in convening today's timely open debate on this critical issue. I would like to pay tribute to all the peacekeepers who have selflessly served in United Nations peacekeeping missions around the world, as well as to extend condolences to those who have fallen in the line of duty.

Since peacekeepers are operating in increasingly complex and risky political and security environments, the safety and security of Blue Helmets has become one of the top priorities for the effective delivery of mandates. Accordingly, relevant stakeholders, such as troop- and police-contributing countries, host countries, the Security Council and the Secretariat, have an ever-growing responsibility to ensure and enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. In this vein, I would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, we must leverage more advanced technologies for stronger performance and improved safety and security for peacekeepers. Given the increasing number of hostile acts targeting Blue Helmets, it is more important than ever to strengthen the capability to identify threats early on and mitigate casualties. Technology should be an integral part of our strategy to improve situational awareness and enhance field support.

As such, the upcoming 2021 Peacekeeping Ministerial will highlight technology and medical capacity as cross-cutting themes, which is in line with the Secretariat's initiative to develop a strategy for the digital transformation of United Nations peacekeeping. The Seoul Ministerial in December will be a great opportunity for Member States to generate tangible pledges related to technology and medical capacity, both of which are vital for the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Secondly, host States should facilitate the free movement of United Nations peacekeepers and their equipment consistent with the mandate, including for casualty and medical evacuation purposes. There have been reported cases of violations of status-of-forces agreements, including restrictions on peacekeepers' movement and delays in resupplying missions. Hindering the freedom of movement threatens the safety and security of peacekeepers as well as the lives of the civilians that peacekeepers are mandated to protect.

To prevent such restrictions and build trust with the host Governments, we should consider engaging more actively with local communities through civilian and military coordination activities. The experience of Korean peacekeepers currently deployed to South Sudan and Lebanon shows us that such engagement can not only improve the safety and security of our peacekeepers but also facilitate the implementation of their mandate.

Thirdly, the Secretariat and troop- and police-contributing countries should regard landmines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) as a major threat to peacekeepers. According to recent research on peacekeeping casualties, mine threats, including IEDs, pose the most lethal threats to missions. As discussed in the Security Council open debate on mine action and sustaining peace held on 8 April (see S/2021/346), appropriate mine action is indispensable to upholding the peace and security agenda.

In particular, substantial predeployment and in-mission training are essential in countering and mitigating the threat of IEDs. Moreover, convoys and peacekeepers should be supported by situational awareness and threat assessments before and

during operations. To strengthen cooperation, the Secretariat and peacekeeping missions should provide adequate information and technical advice to their respective troop and police contributors.

The Republic of Korea is committed to maintaining international peace and security and has contributed all the necessary means, including financing and troops. We are actively exploring new areas and ways to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers, which will ultimately improve the overall performance of peace operations. The Republic of Korea will play its part in strengthening peace operations, while working closely with all relevant partners moving forward.

Annex 49**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Slovakia to the United Nations, Michal Mlynár**

Slovakia welcomes this open debate on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers.

For more than 70 years, as an effective means for maintaining international peace and security, United Nations peacekeeping operations have played an important role in the political settlement of conflicts. The safety and security of those who devote their lives to protect the peace, human rights and lives of civilians is our ultimate responsibility. More action and concrete and practical steps are therefore required for ensuring their safety.

In April this year during a Security Council working group meeting on the occasion of the implementation of resolution 2518 (2020), we named and specified concrete needs to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Current safety and security risks that members of peacekeeping operations often face include insufficient predeployment training, scarce material and technological support and hidden caveats that still pose an unpredictable risk to the military and police components of peacekeeping operations.

Slovakia lauds improvements that have been made, especially in the establishment of assessments of troop readiness and force generation. Yet, more than three years after the publication of the report by Lieutenant General (Retired) Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz entitled *Improving Security of United Nations Peacekeepers*, we are still struggling with predeployment training to conduct peacekeeping operations, caveats and insufficient capacity for operations led primarily by peacekeeping intelligence.

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 alike have posed serious threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers.

Effective preparation for peacekeeping operations must begin with preparation for the defence of one's own State. Furthermore, situational awareness in the field is crucial for peacekeeping operations, which are often deployed in environments characterized by volatility, significant security risks and present hostility. Maintaining situational awareness requires "feeling of the pulse" on local communities, which can have significant impact of the entire peacekeeping process.

The implementation of Action for Peacekeeping Plus priorities — such as accountability of peacekeepers, the generation of right capabilities and mindsets and operational evaluation, with regular involvement of troop-contributing countries and police-contributing countries — has the potential to further increase the operationalization and effectiveness of peacekeeping operations.

The United Nations conducts peacekeeping operations in the twenty-first century, and peacekeepers therefore need to be supported by technologies worthy of the twenty-first century and must face conflict with a precautionary approach, before offenders of the peace threaten their lives.

Slovakia strongly supports the equal and full participation of women in all efforts to create and maintain international peace and security and calls for the full implementation of all relevant Security Council resolutions that address this issue.

Slovakia has been an active troop- and police-contributing country since its admission to the United Nations. Currently, we have peacekeepers deployed in

the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus and in the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization. We have also participated in military and civilian missions of the European Union, NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. I would like to highlight that the members of the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic in Cyprus — our biggest presence in a United Nations mission, where we have been deployed for 20 years and since 2018 have been the sole troop-contributor in Sector 4 — already exceed the targets set in the Uniformed Gender Parity Strategy for the period 2018 to 2028.

Furthermore, for many years already, Slovakia has identified security sector reform (SSR) as one of the key elements for effective conflict prevention and successful post-conflict rebuilding and stabilization. The direct experience from many peacekeeping missions clearly shows that a nationally led and inclusive SSR process can progressively deal with the root causes of insecurity and fragility and create an enabling environment for sustainable development and peace to take place. In addition, SSR is directly linked to the protection of civilians and the rule of law — two critical tasks that have become an integral part of almost every peacekeeping operation.

Annex 50**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Mathu Joyini**

My delegation expresses its appreciation to the People's Republic of China for convening this meeting and for your willingness, Mr. President, to allow the broader membership to engage on a matter that affects the women and men we deploy in dangerous situations to fulfil the mandate of the Organization. We thank the briefers for their informative briefings.

Peacekeeping remains an important tool in the international community's efforts to manage and resolve conflicts. As a troop- and police- contributing country, we find the focus of our meeting on the safety and security of peacekeepers germane to the evolving security threats and dangerous operational environment for our peacekeepers, intensified by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. South Africa would like to raise the following points in the context of the subject matter being considered at this meeting.

We reiterate our support for resolution 2518 (2020), which focuses on the importance of enhancing the safety and security of United Nations peacekeepers. We impress upon all relevant stakeholders the importance of ensuring its full implementation.

South Africa strongly condemns all malicious attacks that have resulted in injury and loss of life among United Nations peacekeepers. We urge host States to pursue the ends of justice whereby perpetrators are held accountable for those atrocities. We also call for an end to the violations of status-of-forces agreements, as some of those acts may compromise the safety and security of peacekeepers.

We call for enhanced measures to address casualties caused by occupational safety and health hazards, including through the implementation of the comprehensive Secretariat-wide occupational and health framework. It is in the interests of all Member States to have in place a consolidated occupational safety and health incident reporting system to collect information, record data and take remedial action.

We reiterate the critical importance of enhanced support to peacekeepers to mitigate attacks and threats through appropriate training and capacity-building, as well as through the use of modern and smart technology. It is imperative that the United Nations form part of the predeployment training of contingents, in order to enhance the level of training of troops.

We will have an opportunity to discuss the use of technology to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers at the United Nations sixth Partnership for Technology in Peacekeeping Symposium, to be hosted by South Africa in the first half of 2022. Preparations are under way to hold the event in Pretoria. We will communicate the details regarding the logistics and dates in due course.

We recognize the need for early warning, peacekeeping intelligence/ information gathering and analysis to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers. Such an activity must be undertaken with the consent of the host State.

As a Champion of the women and peace and security agenda, we underline the dire need to ensure a safe, enabling and gender-sensitive working environment for women in peacekeeping operations.

We also would like to reiterate the importance of equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for all peacekeeping personnel, based on their individual consent. It is also important that diverse vaccines be utilized by the United Nations, as some vaccines may not be effective on certain variants.

Our final point is to buttress the importance of partnerships, especially between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in coordinating and collaborating on various areas pertaining to the safety and security of peacekeepers. We see merit in the sharing of best practices, the pursuit of training and capacity-building between the United Nations and regional organizations, in particular the African Union, as well among the regional groups and training centres.

We are also pleased to have joined the recently established Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers, made up of like-minded countries, which is in pursuit of the overarching objective of ensuring the safety and security of our peacekeepers.

In conclusion, South Africa pays tribute to the women and men who have served in United Nations peacekeeping operations. Their commitment and dedication have saved scores of lives and continues to do so during most unprecedented times. We owe them a great deal of gratitude for their efforts.

Annex 51**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, Pascale Baeriswyl**

[Original: English and French]

I thank China for organizing this debate and the speakers for their contributions.

Significant progress has been made in reducing the risks for personnel deployed in peacekeeping missions. However, we still deplore the unacceptable number of casualties. Political progress in conflict resolution is the ultimate guarantor of security. In parallel, we must redouble our efforts to enhance the security of peacekeepers where political progress is slow, through the following measures:

First, every operation requires an early-warning system to identify threats. To this end, we must strengthen intelligence in peacekeeping operations and make full use of the normative framework established by the Secretariat. The use of new technologies, such as drones or artificial intelligence, can help protect missions. Furthermore, greater diversity within peacekeeping operations allows for differentiated access to local communities, including through the increased participation of women, and thereby helps obtaining a better overview of the situation. We encourage the Council to adopt mandates that allow for the extensive implementation of intelligence capabilities.

Secondly, safe and secure ammunition management is essential to protecting peacekeepers and to preventing ammunition stockpiles from becoming a source for improvised explosive devices (IEDs). Since 2015, Switzerland has been pursuing a political initiative to raise awareness of this issue. We have supported Mali and Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular and contributed to the development of the United Nations International Ammunition Technical Guidelines. These constitute a useful reference framework for the establishment of sustainable national ammunition management, which is essential in transition contexts. The diversion of contingent-owned equipment can also be used to build IEDs. The United Nations Manual on Ammunition Management helps to harmonize the management of contingent-owned stocks. Swiss experts participated in the development of this manual and support its implementation. The Security Council has an important role to play in strengthening ammunition management measures when mandating peace operations, through the training of authorities and peacekeepers and based on the Technical Guidelines and the Manual, especially in transition contexts.

Thirdly, the training of personnel is essential to minimize security risks. It must be adapted to current threats and include modern technologies. Switzerland, for example, complements predeployment training with tailor-made training in the areas of IEDs and non-conventional weapons. Convoy protection, first aid and stress management in hostile areas are also included. In addition, Switzerland contributes to the Triangular Partnership Programme in the field of military engineering and supports the digitalization of the Core Predeployment Training Modules. For over 15 years, Switzerland has also supported the African Union's training centres of excellence, which strengthen African peacekeeping capabilities.

Switzerland, as a member of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of Peacekeepers and as a candidate for a seat on the Security Council, will stay committed to protecting peacekeepers in the spirit of the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative.

Annex 52**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations**

Thailand aligns itself with the statement submitted by Brazil on behalf of the Group of Friends on the Safety and Security of United Nations Peacekeepers (annex 19).

The Blue Helmets are the indispensable frontline to peacekeeping operations and continue to operate in some of the harshest environments with continued commitment, dedication and professionalism. We join other delegations in paying tribute to them and to those who have paid the ultimate sacrifice for the cause of peace.

As a longstanding troop-and police-contributing country (T/PCC), Thailand fully supports the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative and looks forward to its continued priority, including the development of the A4P+, in furthering efforts to ensure the safety and security of peacekeepers. When peacekeepers are safe, physically and mentally, they are more likely to succeed in fulfilling their mandates.

Thailand also shares great concern over the recent increase in attacks on and casualties among peacekeepers. We strongly condemn all acts of violence against peacekeepers and call on host countries to effectively investigate and prosecute those responsible. In this regard, Thailand wishes to highlight the following points:

First, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic continues to impact not only the health and well-being of peacekeepers, but also their best ability to operate. Now that COVID-19 vaccines are increasingly available, it is our responsibility to ensure timely access to vaccines for these essential frontline personnel. We thank the Group of Friends on COVID-19 Vaccination for Uniformed Personnel for its important work.

In addition to COVID-19 vaccines, ensuring adequate and prompt medical support and services remains critical to the safety and security of peacekeepers. The experience of our personnel also suggests that accessible, gender-sensitive health care, as well as accommodation and equipment, are vital to the successful participation of women peacekeepers.

Secondly, we must ensure quality predeployment trainings, including those with mission-specific requirements, as well as the availability of additional Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments trainings, as required.

For our part, Thailand has been developing United Nations-standard predeployment training courses that will enable peacekeepers to handle various situations, including crisis management in cases of attacks by armed groups, and pandemic responses. Concurrently, the protection of civilians and the safety of fellow peacekeepers remain the highest priority of our trainings.

Thirdly, nurturing trust with local communities is vital to the development of situation awareness and early warning mechanism. In this regard, the Thai Horizontal Military Engineering Company in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan continues to support local community development in South Sudan, including by sharing Thailand's best practices on agriculture, water and land management based on our home-grown development approach, the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy, and constructing roads and other infrastructure, as well as COVID-19 screening facilities.

Above all, Thailand strongly believes that the safety and security of peacekeepers can be achieved only through a strong, multi-stakeholder partnership among the United Nations system, regional and subregional organizations, host countries, and T/PCCs. Thailand stands ready to work closely with all partners in this endeavour so that the Blue Helmets are safe, secure, and ready to fulfil their mandates to the fullest of their abilities.

Annex 53**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Ukraine to the United Nations**

Ukraine highly appreciates the initiative of China to convene this open debate and expresses its gratitude to the briefers for their presentations.

As we approach the International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers, the issue of their safety and security appears to be among the most relevant to be addressed. We perceive the Security Council's discussion today as a manifestation of the strong commitment to improving the Blue Helmets' resilience to and protection from any attack, violence, harassment, ill-treatment and misconduct.

Ukraine persistently reiterates its confidence in peacekeeping as one of the United Nations most valuable assets and most efficient tools to respond to situations of conflict and other security threats and challenges. In this regard, Ukraine remains an active troop and police contributor, despite the need to defend its independence and territorial integrity from foreign armed aggression.

We are therefore particularly concerned that the number of casualties among peacekeeping personnel has remained unacceptably high over the past years. In 2020-2021, 182 peacekeepers have lost their lives. Ukrainian peacekeepers are also on this sad list, including due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

We therefore must continue to explore all avenues for the improvement of their safety and security, including on the basis of the resolution 2518 (2020) and the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) initiative.

The A4P task to enhance the safety and security of peacekeepers has to be addressed as a top priority, especially against the backdrop of COVID-19. We welcome the inclusion of anti-pandemic elements into United Nations policies and safety practices on the ground and support the need to ensure the swift vaccination of personnel.

We also call for enhanced efforts to implement the provisions of resolution 2518 (2020), in particular with regard to addressing deficiencies in training, equipment, leadership at all levels, performance and accountability, as well as in the medical capacities of the missions. This is crucial to decrease risks to the safety and security of peacekeepers, including the risk of fatalities.

Our efforts should also be aimed at developing intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities. That means both strengthening missions' technical capabilities and developing communications with local population to increase situational awareness and preparedness. The intelligence system should stretch from the field to Headquarters and utilize common platforms, modern technologies and sufficient analysis capabilities.

In this regard, we take note of the request, made by the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in its report (A/75/19), adopted at this year's session, that the Secretariat complete in due course its peacekeeping technology strategy, in close consultation with Member States, to better integrate the use of technologies to improve the safety and security of peacekeepers.

The abovementioned report also contains a number of other valuable conclusions and recommendations that should be duly implemented, including on documentation of all attacks against peacekeepers and violations of status-of-forces agreements; improving the security infrastructure of camps; and ensuring weapons and ammunition management, proper predeployment trainings by troop- and

police-contributing countries, and the effective investigation and prosecution of those responsible for attacks on United Nations personnel.

Ensuring adequate medical facilities to provide a dependable 10-1-2 casualty response on a 24/7 basis remains another critical task. The work to ensure that medical standards in United Nations peacekeeping operations are met must be given priority.

As the concept note (S/2021/432, annex) rightly points out, the safety and security of peacekeepers are a shared responsibility of the international community, especially the Security Council, the Secretariat, troop- and police-contributing countries, finance-contributing countries and host countries. It is only through concerted action that we can improve the situation in this domain.

In conclusion, the delegation of Ukraine would like to reiterate that it will remain a reliable partner in the United Nations peacekeeping endeavour, including in improving the safety and security of United Nations uniformed and civilian personnel on the ground.
