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Investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him

Letter dated 5 November 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I refer to General Assembly resolution [74/248](#), dated 27 December 2019, concerning the investigation into the circumstances resulting in the tragic death of Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him. Pursuant to the resolution, I reappointed the Eminent Person, Mohamed Chande Othman, in March 2020, to continue the investigation.

In this connection, I wish to bring to your attention the letter from the Eminent Person dated 10 October 2020, advising of his concerns about being able to provide a comprehensive and meaningful report on his work by mid-2021, as mandated by General Assembly resolution [74/248](#), due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic (see annex). The Eminent Person suggests a one-year extension of his mandate and indicates that any such extension may be achieved in a cost-neutral manner.

I support the course of action in the circumstances proposed by the Eminent Person, and invite the General Assembly to take the necessary steps to extend the mandate of the Eminent Person by one year so that I may report to the General Assembly on progress made before the end of its seventy-sixth session.

(Signed) António **Guterres**



Annex

I have the honour to refer to General Assembly resolution [74/248](#), in respect of the investigation into the conditions and circumstances resulting in the tragic death of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld and of the members of the party accompanying him (the Dag Hammarskjöld investigation). I have the further honour to refer to my reappointment by you as Eminent Person pursuant to the above resolution, in March 2020.

As Eminent Person, my current mandate in relation to the Dag Hammarskjöld investigation is to continue to review the information received and possible new information made available by Member States, including by individuals and private entities, to assess its probative value and to draw conclusions from the investigations already conducted.

I am pleased to report that a number of positive developments have taken place this year in furtherance of the implementation of the above resolution. I have been in contact with the representatives of key Member States to request that they recommence the internal review of their respective intelligence, security and defence archives. As you will recall the cooperation of Member States remains of the utmost importance to ensure that all potentially relevant information has been identified and disclosed following a full review of such archives.

Despite making initial headway, the circumstances of 2020 have resulted in significant challenges. Specifically, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) global pandemic has resulted in constraints on communications and engagement with key Member States including South Africa, the United Kingdom and the United States. Certain of these Member States have indicated that they are focused on matters immediately arising from the pandemic for which reason requests for information have not been substantively answered. Further, given restrictions on travel and access to institutions and non-digital records, research has not been able to be advanced in a material way and key interviews and meetings have had to be postponed.

In this light, I am writing to advise that I have concerns about being able to provide you with a comprehensive and meaningful report on my work by the anticipated deadline of July 2021. In particular, the possibility of assessing new information and reaching conclusions, as directed by resolution [74/248](#), has been restricted due to challenges faced as a direct result of COVID-19. I would respectfully suggest that a one-year extension of the mandate, if possible, may ameliorate these challenges and provide a favourable opportunity for discharging the mandate in full. I believe that any such extension may be achieved in a cost-neutral manner by utilizing the presently allocated resources.

I am available to discuss this or any related matter, should it assist.

(Signed) Mohamed Chande **Othman**
Eminent Person