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Seventy-seventh year

Provisional

9145th meeting

Tuesday, 4 October 2022, 10 a.m.

New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Biang.	(Gabon)
<i>Members:</i>	Albania	Ms. Dautllari
	Brazil.	Mr. De Almeida Filho
	China	Mr. Dai Bing
	France	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
	Ghana	Ms. Abbey
	India	Mr. Raguttahalli
	Ireland	Ms. Moran
	Kenya.	Mr. Kiboino
	Mexico	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco
	Norway	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation.	Mr. Polyanskiy
	United Arab Emirates	Mr. Abushahab
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Eckersley
	United States of America.	Mr. Mills

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Thirty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2022/696)

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2631 (2022) (S/2022/714)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the outgoing President

The President (*spoke in French*): I should also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière, Permanent Representative of France, for his service as President of the Council for the month of September 2022. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador De Rivière and his team for the great diplomatic skill with which they conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Thirty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2022/696)

Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2631 (2022) (S/2022/714)

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2022/696, which contains the thirty-fifth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013), and document S/2022/714, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2631 (2022).

I now give the floor to Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert.

Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert: Calls for Iraq's leaders to overcome their differences and form a Government have abounded since elections were held a year ago. Over the past 12 months, we underlined time and again the importance of maintaining calm, dialogue, constitutional compliance, respect for democratic principles, the unimpeded working of State institutions and a functioning Government to effectively address the legitimate demands for better public services, jobs, security, an end to corruption, and justice and accountability, to name but a few elements.

But regretfully, discord and power play prevailed over a sense of common duty. And as a direct result of protracted political inaction, Iraq experienced some very critical and dangerous hours. With protests and counter-protests being staged, tensions were on the rise for months. Supporters of political parties, many of whom carry weapons, got increasingly worked up. And one did not need a crystal ball to see where that could lead. Meanwhile, the ordinary Iraqi citizen was being held hostage to an unpredictable and untenable situation — a dire one that culminated on Monday, 29 August when the country stood on the brink of total chaos. Political tensions degenerated into armed clashes in the heart of the capital and elsewhere. The sad result was dozens of people killed and hundreds wounded.

Those tragic developments are indisputably the result of the inability of Iraq's political class to cast the die. In other words, actors across the spectrum failed to place the national interest first. They left the country in a prolonged impasse, further fuelling already simmering anger. And while one would expect that recent events would have served as a wake-up call, the harsh reality is that, to date, intra-Shia strife has not abated, and neither have Kurdish parties come closer to agreeing on a presidential candidate.

Therefore, where do we stand now? The situation remains highly volatile. After more than two months of paralysis, Parliament resumed its sessions last Wednesday, 28 September, amid very tight security measures. Those measures, however, did not prevent further incidents, including a number of indirect-fire projectile impacts as well as clashes between protesters and security forces.

To be clear: there is zero justification for violence. Yet in this instance again, many were injured — 11 civilians and more than 120 members of the Iraqi security forces, all sons of the country. And we have not seen

the end of it yet. Last night, after three days of rocket attacks, Basra witnessed intense fighting, while smaller incidents were reported in other southern governorates.

On Saturday, 1 October, we remembered the victims of the Tishreen demonstrations. Three years ago, as Council members will recall, Iraqis took to the streets to protest a lack of political, economic and social prospects. It was a mobilization on an unprecedented scale, and it turned into a tragedy. Several hundred Iraqis died, and many more were severely injured, abducted, threatened or intimidated. As a result of the protests, the previous Government stepped down, and early elections were held a year ago. In other words — and I have said it often — last year's elections were extremely hard-earned. With that in mind, the absence of a functioning Government 12 months later is hard to justify.

Last Saturday, new protests were expected. The hope was that they would be held peacefully, but, in the early morning hours, we woke up to another alert from our sense-and-warn alarm system. The day was not off to a promising start. Throughout the day, however, protester numbers remained relatively low, not because Iraqis are now suddenly content, but because they do not wish to be instrumentalized in the ongoing power struggle, as was made abundantly clear by many of those who took to the streets in 2019.

It must be said that, last Saturday, the Iraqi security forces demonstrated great restraint in their response, adhering strictly to given orders. Regrettably, some disruptive elements were present in the streets, and I can only reiterate the importance of keeping any protest from descending into violence. The fact is that the smallest spark can suffice to trigger a major disaster.

We lent our full support to the national dialogue under the auspices of Iraq's Prime Minister, a forum that has thus far been convened twice. For that initiative to bear fruit however, it is crucial that all parties — I repeat, all parties — take their seat. As an aside, it is worth noting that none of the parties was represented by women. That said, it is also incumbent upon all to act responsibly in times of heightened tensions. That means refraining from making provocative statements and feeding into counter-productive, not to say harmful, narratives.

While I am usually disinclined to air our initiatives publicly, I would like to emphasize our intense engagement during the past months and weeks — from

participating in dialogue and holding countless bilateral meetings to drafting road maps and conducting shuttle diplomacy in various forms. Believe me when I say that we tried, non-stop. That said, we do not have a magic wand. Ultimately, it all comes down to political will. Equally important is the understanding that, at the end of the day, one can only be influential if one accepts the influence of others. If only there was a willingness to compromise. One thing is clear: the persistent and overt lack of trust perpetuates a zero-sum game in which commitment to concrete solutions is being avoided.

Nevertheless, there are solutions. Of course, every situation has its own history and idiosyncrasies. But let me be clear: since the elections were held a year ago, all sides — and I mean all sides — have made strategic mistakes and miscalculations. Even more importantly, they missed many valuable opportunities to resolve their differences. With the risk of further strife and bloodshed still very tangible, dwelling on who did what and when is no longer an option. Therefore, it is time for all of Iraq's leaders to engage in dialogue, collectively define core Iraqi needs and pull the country back from the edge.

In other words, all leaders should assume responsibility and return the spotlight to where it must be focused: on the people of Iraq. Make no mistake: public disillusionment is running sky-high. Too many Iraqis have lost faith in the ability of Iraq's political class to act in the interest of the country and its people. A continued failure to address that loss of faith will only exacerbate Iraq's problems.

Focus is equally important. We have seen the announcement of a plethora of initiatives since the elections in October 2021, but too many tracks and too many cooks distract, confuse and blur the picture. As I said, there are solutions, but for solutions to see the daylight, genuine and timely dialogue is essential, including a willingness to compromise. Indeed, it goes without saying that delivering a functioning Government is merely the first step to overcoming the current crisis in a sustainable way.

A wide range of critical issues must be addressed. Chief among them is the adoption of a federal budget, in the absence of which State spending could come to a halt by the end of the year. Work towards transformative change must be kicked off. Let us face it: since 2003, too many opportunities to conduct meaningful and much-needed reform have been wasted. Nearly 20 years on,

Iraq's leaders must acknowledge that systemic change is vital to the country's future.

Attempts to push through incremental reform, including in the fight against corruption, have failed thus far, having been actively undermined or obstructed. I have said it many times, including in this Chamber: corruption is a core feature of Iraq's current political economy, built into everyday transactions. It is not just me saying this. This is widely recognized.

A related feature is Iraq's reliance on patronage and clientelism, which has resulted in a ballooning inefficient public sector that functions more as an instrument of political favour than as a servant of the people. While Iraq is by no means a poor country, private and partisan interests conspire to divert resources away from critical investment in national development. What I am saying is that Iraq's political and governance system ignores the needs of the Iraqi people or, even worse, actively works against them.

Pervasive corruption is a major root cause of Iraqi dysfunctionality, and, frankly, no leader can claim to be shielded from it. Keeping the system as-is will backfire sooner rather than later. That said, it is important to frame it as precisely that — a system — rather than a collection of individuals or a series of events.

As calls for early national elections have become more pronounced, allow me to elaborate further on the topic.

Besides the obvious benefits of political parties clarifying a number of matters in advance, we also emphasized the importance of following established legal procedures and mechanisms. We also made clear that, at this point in time, we would not be able to confirm the ability of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq to assist in new elections, as that would depend on a formal request by the Iraqi Government addressed to the Security Council and, of course, subsequent deliberations.

Other questions are also worth raising. For instance, what are the guarantees that new national elections will not be held in vain once again? How will Iraqi citizens be persuaded that it is worth casting their vote? And what reassurances would the international community need for them to support new elections?

On the topic of elections, we have also actively engaged with Kurdistan Region authorities and political parties on several outstanding issues related

to the sixth Kurdistan Region parliamentary elections. The elections were initially scheduled for 1 October, that is, three days ago. To date, however, Kurdistan Region political parties have yet to find common ground, and, once again, the yellow and green divide is the single most disruptive factor impeding progress. In no uncertain terms, we made clear that, here also, we do not have a magic wand. Here too it comes down to political will. Party leaders should understand that they can only be truly influential if they accept the influence of others, and therefore a willingness to compromise is essential. More generally, monopolizing power breeds instability. That goes for both Iraq as a whole and for the Kurdistan region. I want to stress that the political fallout of not holding timely Kurdistan region parliamentary elections, of failing to manage public expectations properly and of neglecting basic democratic principles will have a high cost, and if that were to happen, it would not be for lack of warning. That is why we are impatiently waiting for the parties to fulfil their many promises and act in the service of the peoples of the Kurdistan region.

When I addressed the Council in May (see S/PV.9034), I raised the alarm about the fact that Turkish and Iranian shelling in the north had become a new normal for Iraq. With last week's Iranian attacks, all I can do now is repeat myself. Those reckless acts — which have devastating consequences, killing and injuring people — must cease. No neighbour should treat Iraq as its backyard. No neighbour should be allowed to routinely violate Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity with impunity, yet it is happening time and again.

On the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, we are pleased to see that Iraq's efforts to reach new witnesses have continued unhindered. Those witnesses are of great importance in helping to locate new potential burial sites. The contribution of the tripartite Member States through their provision of satellite imagery analysis is equally important. The handover by Iraq on 4 July of additional missing Kuwaiti property, including a historical sword, two historical copies of the Holy Qur'an and items belonging to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information marks another positive step. Now it is hoped that with persistence, determination and commitment from all, more results will soon emerge.

In conclusion, let me again emphasize the importance of embarking on a path towards political stability. And to repeat it once more, there are solutions. While it is in the power of any Iraqi leader to drag the country into a protracted and deadly conflict, it is just as much in their power to place national interests first and lift the country out of crisis.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Mills (United States of America): We thank Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her frank and useful briefing and for her leadership of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), which continues to play such an important and respected role in the country.

I must start by strongly condemning the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps missile and drone attacks in the Iraqi Kurdistan region on 28 September. Iran fired at least 48 ballistic missiles, which is a major escalation of its violations of Iraqi sovereignty. Its flagrant violations of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity must stop. Such a brazen attack on a neighbour's territory, especially one that results in the deaths of innocent civilians, is morally reprehensible. We remain concerned about the prospects for renewed violence and welcome the efforts of Iraqi security forces personnel to prevent escalation and protect the right to peaceful protest. The only legitimate way to achieve reform and form a Government responsive to the needs of the Iraqi people is through constructive and inclusive dialogue, not violence.

As we have heard, today's briefing comes nearly a year after Iraq held parliamentary elections. Despite the fact that the elections were credible, peaceful and well managed, the elected parliamentarians and their party leaders have failed to form a Government that serves the people of Iraq. This extended period of political manoeuvring has delayed the critical work of the Government to the detriment of Iraq and its people and has increased tensions that in some cases have devolved into violence, as we have heard. We call on Iraq's elected leaders to shoulder their responsibilities, make compromises, avoid violence and form an inclusive Government that is capable of delivering transparent, effective governance. Complicated challenges face the next Government, including passing a budget;

developing oil and gas legislation that is acceptable to the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government; improving the provision of electricity; combating climate change; promoting private-sector development and job growth; and increasing women's participation in the workforce.

This month also marks three years since the Tishreen protests and the brutal repression of protesters by Iran-affiliated militias intent on silencing the legitimate demands of the Iraqi people. We call on the Iraqi Government to hold accountable those individuals and groups responsible for the abuse of protesters, which left hundreds dead and thousands wounded.

We welcome news of progress on the repatriation of Iraqis from the Al-Hol camp and encourage continued cooperation between the Government, UNAMI and other humanitarian actors in providing Iraqi families and orphans with essential legal documents and rehabilitating and reintegrating them into their communities safely, voluntarily and with dignity, in accordance with their wishes. We call on the Government of Iraq to continue its efforts to create conditions that will enable displaced persons to return to their homes and facilitate durable solutions. It is also important that the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government implement the Sinjar Agreement and address urgent reconstruction and livelihood needs in the Yazidi homeland, where some of Iraq's most vulnerable communities languish without adequate security, infrastructure, education, psychosocial support or livelihoods.

We listened with interest to Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's address to the General Assembly (see A/77/PV.11). His description of the environmental degradation facing Iraq was particularly concerning. We support UNAMI's efforts to assist Iraq as it works to mitigate the environmental crisis and adapt to climate change, including through sustainable development, water management and the use of renewable energies. We encourage Iraq's neighbours and partners to assist as appropriate.

In conclusion, my delegation congratulates Iraq on the occasion of its national day on 3 October, commending the resilience of the Iraqi people as they overcome existential challenges and look toward a more peaceful and prosperous future. We call on all States to support Iraq and respect its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Mr. Raguttaballi (India): I thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, for her briefing. We appreciate the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and fully support the Special Representative's efforts. I also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Iraq in today's meeting.

Nearly a year after the holding of peaceful, free and fair parliamentary elections, the people of Iraq still do not have an elected Government. The continuing political impasse has a direct impact on the people of Iraq, who have already endured immense challenges in the past two decades, from terrorism to economic hardship. India urges all the political parties to rise above their differences and assume greater responsibility for overcoming the current stalemate. A peaceful dialogue on a constructive way forward is the need of the hour. In that regard, we welcome the convening of a national dialogue among Iraq's political leaders and parties. Constructive engagement by all parties in the dialogue will be a critical first step in avoiding further political deadlock and violence.

The ongoing political instability also affects the security situation in Iraq, which continues to be fragile and volatile. We are deeply concerned about the continued terrorist attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Terrorist forces must not be permitted to exploit the current political vacuum in the country.

The continued possession of arms and weapons in large quantities outside State control is a matter of grave concern. It poses a serious challenge to stability in Iraq. The deadly clashes of 29 and 30 August serve as a timely reminder and highlight the urgency of addressing the issue within Iraq's constitutional framework.

The repeated violations of Iraq's sovereignty under the pretext of counter-terrorism operations must end. We condemn all such acts and call on Iraq's neighbours to work with the Iraqi authorities to address all the security challenges they face. Despite its internal challenges, Iraq continues to be a positive contributor to regional stability and friendly relations. We welcome Iraq's efforts and constructive role in promoting regional talks aimed at strengthening security and stability in the region.

We also welcome the cooperation between the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait towards achieving an amicable solution to the issue of missing persons

and the return of Kuwaiti properties. It is imperative to maintain the momentum and move towards an early and mutually satisfactory conclusion to this important humanitarian issue.

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance of the sense of urgency required for Iraq's political leaders to overcome divisions, set aside partisanship and attempt to put the interests of the people of Iraq at the forefront. An end to the political deadlock is urgently required to meet people's aspirations and hopes and secure their safe and prosperous future.

Mr. Eckersley (United Kingdom): Let me start by commending the tireless efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq in difficult circumstances. I would like to make four points today.

First, the United Kingdom offers its deepest condolences for the deaths and casualties caused by violence in the International Zone in Baghdad on 29 and 30 August. As the Special Representative said, the country stood on the brink of chaos. We cannot allow violence to destabilize the political process. We urge Iraq's leaders to work together urgently in the coming weeks to find a peaceful and inclusive solution to the political crisis — the political impasse has gone on too long. Such work will enable Iraq to address and tackle the considerable challenges facing its people, from ensuring the country's long-term security to tackling climate change, delivering urgent economic reform and reconstructing the areas of the country liberated from the control of Da'esh.

Secondly, the United Kingdom condemns in the strongest terms Iran's indiscriminate missile attack on Kurdish towns on 28 September, which led to the loss of innocent lives and damaged civilian infrastructure. Those attacks are a violation of Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and are wholly unacceptable. They demonstrate a repeated pattern of destabilizing activity in the region by Iran. We stand with the Kurdistan Regional Government in condemning those attacks and continue to support the security of Iraq, including the Kurdistan region.

Thirdly, we must carefully manage the humanitarian risks. We welcome the efforts by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Food Programme to support food production and sustainable resource management. We urge regional

neighbours to engage with the Government of Iraq on water shortages. The United Kingdom is also working with the United Nations Development Programme to support the Government of Iraq in dealing with the worst effects of climate change, including by providing support on the governance of water resources.

Finally, we welcome the Special Representative's update on missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property. We note the progress made on the identification of burial sites, including in Najaf, and we urge continued progress on that file.

The fundamental point is this: as the Special Representative has said, Iraq's political leaders must step up their efforts to resolve the current impasse and begin delivering for the Iraqi people. The Security Council must be united in encouraging progress on that.

Ms. Moran (Ireland): I thank the Special Representative for her briefing this morning. Ireland sincerely appreciates her efforts and those of her team in the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in what has been a very challenging period.

We deeply regret that the situation in Iraq has deteriorated considerably since the most recent meeting on this subject, held in May (see S/PV.9034). As others have said, it is almost one year to the day since well-managed and peaceful elections took place across the country. However, Government formation remains painfully elusive. This comes at a great cost to the Iraqi people, for whom critical reforms are long overdue.

We unequivocally condemn the violent clashes that occurred at the end of August in Baghdad, which led to at least 46 deaths. We strongly urge all actors to refrain from resorting to violence to settle political disputes and to make every effort to de-escalate tensions.

The right to peacefully protest is, of course, a fundamental pillar of any democracy, but respect for State institutions and the Constitution must also be upheld. Dialogue can be the only way to overcome the current deadlock. We welcome the efforts by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi to that end, including through the convening of a national dialogue. We encourage all actors to engage in good faith to reach agreement on a fully empowered Government.

More broadly, the security situation at present in Iraq is precarious. Ireland has condemned the deadly artillery attack of 20 July in Dohuk, which tragically killed 9 civilians and injured more. Shelling last week

in the Kurdistan region, claimed by Iran, which has also reportedly resulted in civilian casualties, is deeply concerning. Such attacks must cease immediately.

We urge all actors to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity at all times. We recall how Iraq has shown remarkable commitment to enhancing regional dialogue and fostering good-neighbourly relations over the past years. Iraq's regional and international partners should match that. Its stability is critical to that of the region.

Iraqi women performed remarkably in last year's elections, winning a record number of seats. We commend their activism and achievements in spite of significant obstacles. We also acknowledge the impactful work of UNAMI in engaging with women voters and candidates in the run-up to the elections. However, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General noted this morning, that exemplary performance last October has regrettably not translated into women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the Government formation process, with women largely excluded from the talks.

Later this month, the Informal Expert Group on Women and Peace and Security will consider the situation in Iraq. That will provide an opportunity to identify ways to address the barriers to their participation in political and public life, and we look forward to that discussion.

We were disappointed by the findings of the recent report by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNAMI on accountability and unidentified armed elements in Iraq. While progress on compensation for victims of human rights abuses and violations is a welcome step, true accountability lies in ending impunity. We urge the Iraqi authorities to ensure, albeit in a complex environment, credible investigations for all alleged violations and abuses perpetrated against protestors, activists, journalists and critics. Without that, trust between the State and the Iraqi people will remain elusive.

Finally, we welcome the commitment of both sides to further progress on the Iraq-Kuwait issue relating to missing persons and property.

Ms. Dautllari (Albania): Let me join others in thanking France for its work during the month of September and wishing you, Mr. President, all the best

for the month of October — you can rely on Albania's support this month.

Returning to the issue under discussion, I would like to thank the Special Representative for the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert, for her briefing and welcome the presence of the representative of Iraq in today's meeting.

We condemn in the strongest terms the deadly attack in Iraq. Albania expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the victims' families and wishes a speedy and full recovery to those injured. Furthermore, we call on Iran to respect Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to refrain from intimidation, threats and a further escalation of violence.

We reaffirm our strong support for Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity and condemn all attempts to undermine its stability and political independence. Furthermore, we are also worried about the security situation regarding the threat posed by Da'esh. I reiterate Albania's principled support for ensuring accountability for all violations of international law, delivering justice and taking a firm stance against impunity.

Iraq has gone through enormous challenges in recent years. However, the deadlock in the Government-formation process following the October 2021 parliamentary elections is a growing threat to the stability of the country and its role in the region. We urge all parties involved to rise above their differences and commit to inclusive dialogue.

There is an urgent need for a new Iraqi Government to tackle the many challenges ahead, as noted by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by many of those challenges. An inclusive and united Government, with the meaningful participation of women, will better respond to the hopes and aspirations of the Iraqi people.

In the current acute and dire humanitarian situation that Iraq is facing, we commend the Iraqi authorities for repatriating more than 2,500 Iraqis while respecting the principles of accountability and reintegration. In addition, we welcome the intensified field mission concerning the repatriation and return of all Kuwaiti and third-country nationals or their remains. The mission will increase the possibility of identifying new burial sites in Iraq. We also commend the recent handover of

Kuwaiti property. That is also an essential step forward in Iraq's efforts to strengthen its social contract with its citizens and neighbours. We also welcome the adoption of the law for emergency support for food and security and development and hope that its implementation will lessen the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Considering that Iraq is the fifth-most vulnerable country in the world to the effects of climate change, we commend UNAMI's work on the impact of climate change in Iraq, and we took note of the concerns on that issue expressed by the Iraqi Prime Minister during the general debate of the General Assembly (see A/77/PV.11).

In conclusion, we believe that UNAMI is a critical partner to the Iraqi people and has played a vital role in helping Iraq during this democratic transition.

Mr. De Almeida Filho (Brazil): Let me start by echoing your words, Mr. President, commending the French presidency during the month of September. I also wish Gabon all the best during the month of October. Gabon can count on Brazil.

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her briefing, and I would like to welcome the delegation of Iraq to this meeting.

Like the written report submitted by the Secretary-General to the Council Members a week ago (S/2022/714), the presentation made by the Special Representative today reminds us of events in Iraq that we have been following closely, including through our Embassy in Baghdad.

As protesters have once again taken to the streets to express their frustration with domestic politics in Iraq, Brazil calls upon the Iraqi authorities, the political leaders and parties and the Iraqi population, in general, to exercise restraint and not to fuel violence, hatred or civil unrest.

Brazil is also concerned with the attacks in the Iraqi Kurdistan region last week. Like other recent attacks on Iraq from without, they are contrary to international law and threaten the territorial integrity of the country and the stability of the entire region. In that regard, we acknowledge the importance of calls from within the Council for the protection of civilians under all circumstances.

Under the terms of resolution 2631 (2022), we convene to assess the progress made in the

implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). As a mission under Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, UNAMI's mandate hinges upon the consent of the Iraqi Government. It is therefore only fair that we turn to Iraqi officials for further input. In our view, the most important aspect of UNAMI's mandate is to support the Iraqi Government on advancing political dialogue and national reconciliation. Success in the implementation of that mandate should be measured through concrete results.

Brazil had hoped that the circumstances in Iraq would have allowed for the swift formation of a Government based on the outcome of the October 2021 elections. However, a year has now elapsed and the current political impasse has taken hold. Drawing on that experience, we should encourage inclusive and meaningful dialogue among all Iraqi political parties rather than calling for expedited solutions today. Only thus will they be able to bridge their differences and make the necessary political agreements beforehand. In that regard, we see value in the organization of the national dialogue proposed by the Iraqi Prime Minister, and we hope all political groups in Iraq can participate in that dialogue. We also note with satisfaction that the Special Representative attended two sessions of that national dialogue, on 17 August and 5 September.

Brazil, of course, stands ready to lend its support to Iraqi efforts to achieve peace and stability in the country. In our view, that is also the primary goal of UNAMI's presence in Iraq. At the same time, we understand that it is not for us to dictate how Iraqi authorities should go about setting or pursuing their national priorities.

Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing. I welcome the participation of the representative of Iraq in this meeting.

The Special Representative shared with the Security Council an analysis of the situation in Iraq, which can be summed up as follows. It is not possible to build democratic institutions and uphold the rule of law when the very root of the situation in Iraq, almost 20 years ago, was another invasion of a sovereign country, in violation of the Charter of the United Nations. The same thing could occur in other States whose territorial integrity and independence are being infringed upon while recourse to diplomacy continues to be ignored.

Mexico joins others in condemning the attack that took place in the Iraqi Kurdistan region just a few days ago. Unfortunately, that was not an isolated incident, but a confirmation of a dangerous trend, together with the recent attacks in Dohuk and Erbil. Those attacks are contrary to international law. They constitute a violation of Iraqi sovereignty and territorial integrity and pose a serious risk to the stability of the region.

In addition, in the past three months there have been more than 180 attacks against Iraqi security forces, attributed to the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as well as bombings against Government buildings, diplomatic facilities and vehicles and clashes between law enforcement and demonstrators.

In the light of that alarming security situation, I will now focus on the political impasse and the need to resume institutional strengthening.

This week marks the third anniversary of the beginning of the popular protests for regime change, which led to early elections last year. Now, nearly a year after those elections, unfortunately, the political factions have been unable to translate the popular will into a functioning Government. We welcome the fact that the participants in the national dialogue convened by the Prime Minister reiterated their commitment to resolving the political crisis while respecting the democratic constitutional order. We hope that that initiative will lead to the formation of an inclusive Government.

Despite the high number of women elected as members of Parliament, we note that they have been largely excluded from the process of forming a Government. We underline the importance of ensuring the full, equal and meaningful participation of women, young people and minorities in that process.

Furthermore, we urge both the Baghdad Government and the Erbil Regional Government to resolve disputes over the budget and the management of natural resources, as well as the full implementation of the Sinjar Agreement, through dialogue. That process must of course take place within the constitutional framework.

Nevertheless, at the regional level, Iraq has played a key role in the stability of the region. In that regard, my delegation also recognizes the ongoing progress and bilateral cooperation by the Iraqi Government in

resolving the outstanding issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals.

We also take note of the Special Representative's recent visit to the Al-Hol refugee camp in Syria. We acknowledge the efforts of the Iraqi Government and the assistance of humanitarian agencies to continue the repatriation and relocation of approximately 28,000 Iraqis.

With regard to institutional capacity-building, I would like to highlight the collaboration in electoral matters that Mexico and Iraq have maintained for almost two decades. In that context, I am pleased to announce that, this month, in October, a delegation of Iraqi electoral judges is planning to participate in a capacity-building programme provided by the National Electoral Institute and the Electoral Tribunal of the Judiciary of our country.

Before concluding, I once again reaffirm the importance of very soon seeing a prosperous, democratic and sovereign Iraq as a fundamental building block for achieving peace and stability in the Middle East.

Mr. Abushahab (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. We wish you the utmost success. We also thank France for its successful presidency of the Council last month.

I would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, for her thorough briefing. We welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Iraq, Ambassador Mohammed Bahr Aluloom, in today's meeting.

Today's meeting takes place amid a critical period for Iraq. The delay in forming a new Government over the recent months has led to an escalation of the situation, an increase in violence and civilian deaths and injuries. In that context, my country expresses its concern over those events. We call on the relevant stakeholders to overcome the obstacles hindering the formation of a new Iraqi Government and to ensure that the interests of the Iraqi people prevail over all other considerations. There should be an urgent return to constructive dialogue, calm and self-restraint. Those are essential and indispensable demands. A stable and credible Iraqi political institution is necessary to meet the aspirations of the Iraqi people, who seek

security, reform and prosperity and must be ensured access to basic services. We stress that further violence will not only impact Iraq and its people, but also the entire region.

The United Arab Emirates also emphasizes its rejection of foreign interference in the internal affairs of Iraq, which undermines Iraq's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. We also condemn violence of any kind, which continues to destabilize Iraq's security and stability, in violation of human principles and values. That also includes terrorist acts, especially as Da'esh continues its relentless attacks on Iraqi territories — reaching 184 in number during the reporting period covered by the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/714). We commend the achievements made by the Iraqi forces in combating that scourge, and we look forward to continued efforts until the threat is fully eliminated.

There is also a need to continue efforts to fight extremism and terrorism and address their causes. There are concerns that the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation in camps, such as Al-Hol in Syria, will provide fertile ground for radicalization and for terrorist groups to exploit the situation to recruit the next generation of terrorists. In that regard, we welcome Iraq's repatriation, with United Nations assistance, of more than 2,500 citizens from Al-Hol camp. We emphasize the need to seriously and urgently work towards reaching a sustainable solution to the situation in the camp.

The progressive progress made during the past four months regarding the missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals, as well as missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, is encouraging, and we hope that such progress will continue. We commend the efforts of Kuwait and Iraq in that regard.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates supports the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in the implementation of its mandate, in coordination with the Iraqi Government. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Mr. Claudio Cordone on assuming his new position as Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs and Electoral Assistance. I would also like to commend the Iraqi people for showing resilience in the face of difficult challenges that they are still subjected to. I reiterate my country's steadfast support for security and stability in Iraq, as well as reconstruction efforts.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We wish to thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for her briefing on the situation in the Republic of Iraq.

We are closely following the developments in friendly Iraq, where we remain concerned about the internal political instability, compounded by a difficult socioeconomic situation. Since late July, in Baghdad and a number of provinces in the south of the country, there have been mass protests, accompanied by the seizure of Government buildings and attacks on the offices of political parties. Several dozen people were killed in the violent clashes, and hundreds were injured, including law enforcement officers.

Those events were the result of acute differences among Iraq's leading political forces, which have not been able to complete the formation of Government bodies following the early parliamentary elections for the Council of Representatives of Iraq, held in October 2021. We hope that the parties represented in Parliament will soon agree on the candidacy of the President and the composition of the new Government, based on the support of all the main political associations and ethno-religious groups in the country.

We express our grave concern over the military escalation in the northern parts of the country, including in the Kurdish Autonomous Region, which resulted in the deaths of many civilians and children. We extend our sincere condolences to the families of the dead.

Once again, we reiterate that ensuring the safety of civilians needs to remain a priority. We share the view of the President of Iraq, Mr. Barham Salih, that his country should not become an arena for score-settling. At the same time, we take note of the statement by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps that the recent attack, for which Iran claimed responsibility, constitutes a response to a major threat to the country's security from the terrorist groups based in the Kurdish Autonomous Region.

According to the recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2022/714), in various provinces of the Republic, there indeed have been reports of attacks by fighters from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, including with the use of suicide bombers, which destabilized the already restive security atmosphere in the region. In this context, we wish once again to reiterate that in order to effectively ward off this threat,

there is a need for the broadest possible coordination of counter-terrorism efforts. We believe there is a need for all stakeholders engaged in counter-terrorism in Iraq to respect the sovereignty of the Iraqi State and to coordinate their action with the country's officials.

One cannot but note that a sustained normalization in Iraq is obstructed by attempts by certain external players to gain benefit from the internal difficulties. In this context, we urge the international community to support Baghdad's efforts aimed at stabilizing the country, including ensuring law and order and restoring the social, financial and humanitarian sectors in the Republic.

We believe that it is unacceptable for this country to morph into an arena for personal score-settling and regional confrontation. The Russian Federation supports the efforts of the Iraqi Government geared towards remedying the situation. We trust that all Iraqi stakeholders will take a responsible approach, eschew violence and strive to resolve their differences exclusively through the legal system, accounting for the interests of all groups in the country. We value the resumed dialogue between the federal authorities of Baghdad and the Kurdish Autonomous Region on resolving existing differences, first and foremost in the oil and gas spheres. We believe that a further resolution will help to advance efforts to settle the ethno-religious issues that have amassed and support harnessing the economic potential for the benefit of the entire Iraqi people.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability of Iraq.

Mr. Dai Bing (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to congratulate Gabon on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and thank France for its excellent work as President of the Council over the last month.

China thanks Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and welcomes the Permanent Representative of Iraq at today's meeting. I also wish to congratulate Iraq for National Iraqi Day, which was celebrated yesterday.

At present, Iraq is in a crucial political phase, facing such major tasks as forming a new Government. We sincerely hope that all parties in Iraq will strengthen unity, properly settle their differences, and, within the

constitutional and legal framework, conduct dialogue and consultations to seek consensus on next steps in political arrangements, with a view to laying a solid political foundation for lasting peace, development and prosperity.

All members of the international community should fully respect the sovereignty and ownership of Iraq and support the Iraqi people in independently choosing a development path that fits their national conditions. With its strategic location and its ethnic and religious diversity, Iraq should become a propeller of regional cooperation, not a playing field for geopolitical competition.

China commends Iraq for developing good-neighbourly and friendly relations with countries in the region and for promoting regional integration. We support Iraq in its joint efforts with Kuwait to achieve progress in the search for missing Kuwaiti nationals and property.

China has always stood for full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, including Iraq, and has always stood for common security through cooperation. Iraq has made huge sacrifices in combating the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant and recovering the territories originally occupied by terrorists and extremist organizations. The international community must continue its firm support for Iraq in eradicating the remnants of terror and in consolidating the hard-won counter-terrorism results. The United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant must turn over to Iraq as soon as possible the evidence it has collected and help the country bring terrorists to justice in accordance with domestic law.

China welcomes Iraq's ongoing efforts aimed at repatriating and resettling Iraqi citizens from Al-Hol camp in Syria. We urge other countries to take up their responsibilities as Iraq has done and speed up the identification and repatriation of foreign terrorist fighters and their families from Iraq.

Over the past three decades or so, Iraq has experienced ups and downs in its situation, which has brought enormous suffering to its people. Under the current circumstances, the international community should continue its firm support for Iraq in safeguarding its security and stability and actively help the country rebuild with a focus on improving people's

livelihoods. The United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and other United Nations agencies must channel greater resources and attention towards supporting Iraq's national development priorities. In its work related to human rights and humanitarian assistance, UNAMI must strictly follow its mandate, closely communicate and coordinate with the Iraqi Government and improve the screening and verification of information.

Ms. Heimerback (Norway): I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Hennis-Plasschaert, for her clear and important briefing and for all her efforts and those of her team during very challenging times.

Almost a year has gone by since Iraq conducted parliamentary elections, yet still no Government has been formed. Norway joins the Secretary-General and others in expressing concern over this situation and the risks it may pose for Iraq's political stability. The formation of a Government is vital to addressing the many challenges Iraq is facing.

It is time for Iraqi political leaders to unite. It is time to find compromises. Iraq must have a Government that can work in the best interests of the Iraqi people. And we encourage all political leaders to ensure the meaningful participation of women, youth and civil society.

Norway is deeply concerned at the increase in political tensions and violence. We call for calm and restraint. All parties must take steps to de-escalate, and violence must be avoided. As the Security Council has stated on several occasions, the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected.

The year 2022 is the final year of the humanitarian response plan. We commend the Iraqi authorities for taking over the responsibility of fulfilling humanitarian needs. Children are especially vulnerable. In the current efforts to reintegrate displaced families into their home communities, special care should be made to protect children and treat them as victims of war. This includes children formerly associated with the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Norway will continue its humanitarian assistance and cooperation with Iraqi authorities.

Finally, the challenges Iraq is facing are also exacerbated by climate change and severe environmental problems. Norway commends the joint efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the

Iraqi authorities on climate action, improving regional cooperation on water management and investing in a renewable future. For this work to succeed, it must include working with private partners and civil society.

Mrs. Broadhurst Estival (France) (*spoke in French*): I in turn would like to thank the Special Representative for her briefing. I would also like to welcome the Permanent Representative of Iraq to this meeting today

France strongly condemns the massive air strikes claimed by Iran in the autonomous region of Kurdistan in Iraq, which indiscriminately struck civilians. They are a serious violation of Iraqi sovereignty and international law and a threat to peace and security. France recalls its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and calls for respect for the stability and security of the autonomous Kurdistan Region in Iraq. We call on the concerned actors to cease all interference in the internal affairs of Iraq.

A year after the parliamentary elections, the political situation remains deadlocked. We call on the political actors to fulfil their responsibilities and agree on the formation of a Government. We also call on them to reaffirm their commitment to the Iraqi constitutional framework and to respect the integrity of Iraqi institutions. We welcome and encourage the initiatives taken by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi to relaunch the national dialogue, which is the only possible way out of the current impasse. It is essential that the dialogue be inclusive and allow for the participation of women, who until now have been excluded from the talks, despite having been elected in large numbers to Parliament, as has been recalled several times in this meeting.

Every day without a Government established by the most recent elections increases the risk of Iraq being destabilized. The government formation is an urgent step to avoid a further deterioration of the situation. France also calls on the authorities in Baghdad and Erbil to return to the path of dialogue. Cooperation between the federal authorities and the autonomous Kurdistan Region on matters of common interest, in particular security and oil resources, is essential.

Despite the challenges facing Iraq, the country continues its courageous fight against Da'esh. France reiterates its full support for Iraq in the fight against terrorism and will continue its commitment in that respect as part of its contribution to the international counter-Da'esh coalition, with full respect for Iraq's

sovereignty, for as long as necessary and as requested by Iraq.

Iraq also continues to play a positive role at the regional level. We commend the efforts in this respect by the Prime Minister and support all regional dialogue initiatives that contribute to stability in the region and to addressing global challenges. We are working at the new summit of Heads of State and Government in Amman, in the so-called "Baghdad format", which has laid the foundations for a credible regional dialogue, something the region urgently needs.

Finally, I would like to commend the cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait on the issue of missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals. The progress made thanks to the requests for witnesses and satellite imagery are important. We encourage both States to continue their dialogue on that issue.

The President (*spoke in French*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Gabon on behalf of the three African members of the Security Council (A3), namely, Ghana, Kenya and Gabon.

(*spoke in English*)

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, for her informative briefing, which we followed closely, on recent developments in Iraq and the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). We also welcome the participation of the representative of Iraq at this meeting.

We will focus our statement on three main issues relating to the situation in Iraq: the political, security and humanitarian aspects.

On the political front, Iraqis are still waiting for the formation of a Government long after the parliamentary elections that were held on 10 October 2021. The persistent lack of unity among political actors and the lack of inclusion, particularly of women, despite the remarkable results they obtained in the elections, are obstacles to the implementation of reforms essential to the suitable functioning of the country. The rapid formation of a new Government is more crucial now. It will be a critical first step towards promoting long-term political stability in Iraq. As evidenced by recent protests in Iraq, further delays in forming a Government will only have a destabilizing impact on the country.

We see an urgent need for a new Iraqi Government that will also be able to address the multiple challenges facing the country. A new Iraqi Government will be vital for the implementation of reforms essential to the proper functioning of the country and responding to the legitimate aspirations of the Iraqi people for peace, security, stability and socioeconomic progress through the provision of basic services and to contain the adverse effects of climate change, characterized by extreme weather conditions.

It is in that spirit that the A3 calls on the various political actors to take concerted steps to defuse tensions and to engage in a genuine and inclusive political dialogue based on peaceful, democratic and constitutional principles and means in the spirit of political compromise. Reaching a decision on the selection and election of a president would in that regard be a positive first step.

We also strongly encourage the inclusion and involvement of women in the quest for political initiatives and the efforts towards Government formation to resolve the impasse.

The A3 commends the continued support of UNAMI to the post-election activities in Iraq and calls on the Independent High Electoral Commission and the Independent High Elections and Referendum Commission of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to strengthen their cooperation and pool their technical expertise.

We take note of the efforts of the Government of Iraq to foster dialogue and cooperation within the region. We therefore encourage Iraq's regional and international partners to support those efforts while respecting the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity and good-neighbourly relations for the benefit of the country and the region.

We further welcome the ongoing cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait and encourage more progress on that important file.

On the security front, the situation in Iraq remains volatile and worrying, including in the Kurdistan region. Asymmetrical attacks by Da'esh and unidentified armed groups targeting Iraqi security forces, drone overflights and the use of explosive devices and ballistic missiles are recurrent. That escalation of violence is likely to hamper hard-won peace and stability efforts on Iraqi territory. We therefore call for urgent de-escalation

and discourage any actions that would impede government formation.

The A3 condemns military operations by external actors in the north and reaffirms that Iraq must not be used as an international arena for States and non-State actors to settle scores at the expense and detriment of the security, political stability and socioeconomic progress of the country and its people.

In the meantime, we are deeply concerned by the recent attacks of 28 September, which killed many people and injured civilians, including children.

On the humanitarian front, significant needs remain. Civilians are paying the heaviest price for the instability in Iraq. According to UNAMI, of the 87 facts established during the period under review, there were 201 civilian casualties, including women and children, mainly affected by small arms fire, improvised explosive devices, shelling and remnants of war.

Violations of children's rights are of the utmost concern to us. There are 63 documented cases of grave violations against children, including killing, maiming, abduction, sexual violence and recruitment.

We take note of the observations by the Committee against Torture on Iraq's second periodic report on measures taken to ensure compliance with the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and the recommendations made, including the adoption of legislation against torture. In the same vein, we note that the impact of the Iraqi Government's human rights efforts, including compensation for victims, is relatively limited, owing to the persistence of impunity for the perpetrators of violations. To that end, we commend UNAMI's work in promoting the Iraqi authorities' prevention and capacity-building efforts. The A3 welcomes the assistance that the United Nations, in collaboration with the Government of Iraq, continues to provide to internally displaced persons, returnees and refugees, despite the drastic decline in humanitarian funding. We join the Special Representative in congratulating the Government of Iraq on the repatriation of more than 2,500 Iraqis in accordance with the principles of accountability and reintegration. We also welcome the continued commitment of the United Nations to providing them with humanitarian and protection assistance following their return.

In conclusion, we reiterate the full support of the A3 for UNAMI's efforts in the implementation of resolution 2631 (2022) and for Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert in her commitment to implementing the United Nations mandate under the resolution.

(spoke in French)

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Iraq.

Mr. Bahr Aluloom (Iraq) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on Gabon's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to thank Ambassador Nicolas de Rivière, Permanent Representative of France, for his remarkable efforts during France's presidency of the Council in September. I also thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her briefing.

The political process in Iraq has been deadlocked, and that has delayed the formation of a new Iraqi Government following the October 2021 parliamentary elections. All our stakeholders and political blocs are aware of the situation and have therefore engaged in a constructive, serious and frank dialogue aimed at reaching an agreement and finding solutions to the current political impasse. A parliamentary session was held last week for the first time in two months, bearing witness to renewed confidence in the Speaker and the selection of a first Vice-Speaker and representing another step in the right direction that will enable Parliament to carry out its supervisory and legislative roles and the parliamentary committees to conduct their daily activities. It is an important step towards a political breakthrough, in the light of the constitutional deadlines and the applicable laws that will eventually lead to the election of a President of the Republic and the formation of a new Government, which is what is required to meet the basic needs of the Iraqi people and guarantee political security and economic stability for Iraq and the region.

We are marking the third anniversary of the peaceful Tishreen demonstrations of 2019, led by young Iraqi men and women asking for reform and combating corruption. We ask God to have mercy on the martyrs and offer our condolences to their families, and we wish

those who were injured a speedy recovery. We also commend the efforts of the Iraqi security forces, who demonstrated the utmost responsibility and restraint in providing professional, peaceful protection for the demonstrations — the third such commemoration of the Tishreen movement — that took place three days ago. They avoided confrontation except in a few cases when some demonstrators attempted to attack them violently.

The Government stands ready to make Iraq a source of stability within the region and internationally and to help find sustainable peaceful solutions to the crises and disputes among the countries of the region, while avoiding their adverse effects on the security and stability of Iraq. Through its balanced relationships and diplomacy, the Government of Iraq has supported several initiatives and meetings among the countries of the region that were among the successful outcomes of the Baghdad Conference for Partnership and Cooperation. Consultations are currently under way on convening the Conference's second session. I would now like to briefly point to the most significant developments that have taken place in Iraq over the past four months.

First, with regard to the security situation, Iraq would like to thank the Security Council for its support and for strengthening our capacities in the fight against terrorism. We were grateful for the July field visit by the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, made on behalf of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1373 (2001) concerning counter-terrorism. Iraq is committed to continue cooperating with the Global Coalition against Da'esh. We are also committed to multilateral cooperation with the United Nations and its specialized entities. We look forward to welcoming Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, the Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT), in the near future.

Iraq reaffirms the concerns mentioned in the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/714), especially given the fact that tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters and their families remain in detention camps in Syria. We call on the United Nations to step up its presence on the ground through the OCT. Iraq emphasizes the importance of Member States' repatriation of their nationals from Al-Hol and other camps and of ensuring that the responsible authorities extradite all Iraqi terrorist fighters to Iraq. We also underscore that we stand ready to complete the work of repatriating our nationals from the camps, and we hope

that the international community will support us in their rehabilitation and reintegration. Iraq once again urges that its territories not be used to settle scores or achieve political goals on a pretext of combating terrorism, and we call on the Security Council and Member States to seriously consider that issue.

Breaches by Türkiye and Iran have continued through land and air violations against Iraq based on unsubstantiated pretexts and claims. After shelling by Türkiye that targeted Iraqi families in a resort in Dohuk governorate in July, Iran carried out air attacks with missiles and drones against cities and villages in the Kurdistan region all of last week, and in particular last Wednesday morning, 28 September, resulting in the deaths of many martyrs and several Iraqi civilians injured, including women and children. It terrorized the population and destroyed infrastructure. The Foreign Ministry summoned the Iranian Ambassador in Baghdad and handed him a letter expressing the Iraqi Government's vehement condemnation of that heinous crime. We emphasized our rejection of those acts and their consequences while demanding respect for the sovereignty of Iraq, and we called on Iran to live up to its international commitments and abandon the language of weapons in working to deal with the security challenges facing the region. We have also warned of the consequences of such acts for the communal peace of both countries and for international and regional security and stability. In that context, we call on the Security Council to maintain its united position on the Iraqi dossier and its emphasis on the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq by condemning any foreign aggressions against it, regardless of the perpetrators, as well as the use of Iraq as an arena for conflicts and for exporting problems.

Iraq looks forward to receiving further United Nations support in order to rebuild the liberated regions that were destroyed by Da'esh terrorist gangs. We also look forward to receiving further United Nations assistance in order to respond to urgent basic humanitarian needs and to promote Iraqi capacities. We hope to receive support for our governmental programme for restoring the liberated areas and rebuilding damaged infrastructure as well.

The Government of Iraq reiterates its commitment to implementing its 2030 national strategy for higher education, which includes increasing school attendance to 100 per cent and improving the quality of general and higher education, while also enhancing skills in

line with the labour market and economic development requirements. In terms of women's empowerment, we have restored the Ministry of Women's Affairs, providing it with a ministerial portfolio and a clear mandate to promote and protect women's rights and advance gender equality. The Women's Empowerment Directorate is implementing the second Iraqi national plan in line with resolution 1325 (2000), aimed at enhancing women's participation in leadership and decision-making and thereby strengthening peace and security. Political stakeholders are also keen to increase the participation of Iraqi women in political life and in the current dialogue on forming the new Government, enabling them to occupy senior and leadership positions in our national institutions.

The General Directorate for Yazidi Survivors is collecting evidence and information regarding all survivors in order to implement the specific reparations in line with the law. They have also been allocated part of the food security budget adopted recently by the Iraqi parliament.

The Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights is following up on the humanitarian and relief situation and on the health front, as well as monitoring the health care provided to displaced families in camps. It is also monitoring the steps that the Antiquities and Heritage Authority is taking to rebuild minority archaeological sites in the regions of Nineveh Plains and other governorates where those minorities live. The office continues to monitor and document violations of human rights while launching awareness campaigns in line with international conventions aimed at combating domestic violence. The Iraqi Government and the relevant national institutions and law-enforcement agencies are also monitoring and prosecuting violations and individual acts in line with Iraq's international commitments to enhancing and protecting human rights.

Turning to the issues of desertification and climate change, Iraq is the fifth most vulnerable country to climate change in the world. We are suffering from water scarcity and changes in the water courses we share with neighbouring countries. We have also been negatively affected by projects that were implemented without taking account of the impact they would have on water-sharing with riparian countries. That has led to increasing desertification and drought in most of the natural protected reserves listed as part of world heritage in the Al-Ahwar region. It also led to a reduction in arable lands and increased internal displacement. Iraq

therefore urges all the countries of the region to engage in a dialogue aimed at resolving our water issues in line with international laws and conventions.

Iraq is an oil-producing country that has contributed to global economic recovery since the beginning of the twentieth century. While it is suffering from the consequences of climate change, it is also bound to be affected by all the measures being taken to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Despite that, the Iraqi Government has been implementing important strategic projects in the fields of clean energy and gas extraction, as well as other sectors related to the green economy, and it therefore needs international support as it continues to pursue those efforts.

Iraq and its sister State of Kuwait are working to strengthen their relationship, overcome obstacles and resolve outstanding issues in a way that guarantees the rights of both parties, which will contribute to finding a solution to the issues of disappeared persons, our maritime borders and Kuwaiti property. With regard to missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, this year we have been pursuing our efforts through the Technical Subcommittee of the Tripartite Committee, which held its 120th meeting on 30 May in Riyadh and its 121st on 31 July in Baghdad, while the Tripartite Committee held its fifty-third meeting on 1 June. The meetings focused on locating important burial sites in Tall Al-Shaykhiyah, Karbala, Al-Khamisiyah and a potential fourth site in Samawah, as well as Salman Pac site and other sites in Kuwait, with the assistance of archive records and witness accounts. We have also analysed satellite images and determined their date and

location and increased field missions to some of those sites, in addition to discussing the issue of a missing Saudi national who claims that he was detained in Al-Nasiriyah prison and then transferred to another location before being released in 2017, according to the information Kuwait received from witness accounts. With regard to Kuwaiti property, on 4 July, the Iraqi Foreign Ministry made an official delivery to the State of Kuwait containing material and property found by the Iraqi Government, including historical items as well as 738 boxes of items related to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his steadfast support for Iraq and his calls for respect for Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also commend the international community for its support, which will ultimately enable Iraq to achieve prosperity and stability for the Iraqi people. On behalf of the Iraqi Government, we also want to express our appreciation to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and its Head of Mission for the support they have provided to Iraq in various areas, especially on the humanitarian and development fronts, during the reporting period covered in the Secretary-General's report (S/2022/714).

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.