

27. The situation in the Middle East

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held 16 meetings, including 6 closed meetings with the troop-contributing countries,⁶⁰⁴ in connection with the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”, adopting seven resolutions and three presidential statements. The Council primarily addressed three topics in the meetings: (a) the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF);⁶⁰⁵ (b) the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)⁶⁰⁶ including resolution 1701 (2006); and (c) the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, on 21 October 2011, the Council adopted resolution 2014 (2011) concerning the situation in Yemen, in which it demanded, inter alia, that all sides immediately reject the use of violence to achieve political goals, and that the Yemeni authorities immediately ensure that their actions comply with obligations under applicable international humanitarian and human rights law.

The Council renewed the mandate of UNDOF four times for a period of six months each time.⁶⁰⁷ The Council renewed the mandate of UNIFIL twice for a period of one year each time.⁶⁰⁸

30 June 2010 to 30 June 2011: renewal of mandate of UNDOF, and incidents in the Syrian Arab Republic

On 30 June and 22 December 2010, respectively, the Council decided to renew the mandate of UNDOF for a period of six months each time. Immediately following each of the decisions, the Council adopted statements by the President concurring with the statement of the Secretary-General that “the situation in the Middle East is tense and is likely to remain so, unless and until a comprehensive settlement covering

all aspects of the Middle East problem can be reached”.⁶⁰⁹

On 30 June 2011, following the extension of the mandate of UNDOF until 31 December 2011, the Council discussed the two incidents that had occurred on 15 May and 5 June 2011, when demonstrators crossed the ceasefire line in the UNDOF area of operations, resulting in civilian casualties. Council members expressed concern at the incidents and called upon both Israel and the Syrian Arab Republic to respect the terms of the 1974 disengagement agreement, by which both parties were obligated to prevent violations of the ceasefire line and the area of separation. Several Council members referred to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and called upon its Government to cease the violent repression of its own people.⁶¹⁰ However, the representatives of the Russian Federation and China stated that the renewal of the mandate of UNDOF and the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic were separate issues and should not be linked, with the latter being an internal affair of that country and not one that posed a threat to international peace and security.⁶¹¹ The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, while emphasizing that it was committed to working with UNDOF and ensuring the safety of its personnel, pointed out that Israel had not yet complied with, inter alia, resolution 497 (1981)⁶¹² and withdrawn from the Golan Heights. He stated that the Council should focus on real issues within its mandate, instead of meddling in the internal affairs of a Member State.⁶¹³ The representative of Israel expressed the view that the Syrian Arab Republic had not carried out its responsibilities in ensuring the security of the disengagement line, in a blatant attempt to distract international attention from its violent repression of its own people.⁶¹⁴

⁶⁰⁴ For UNDOF, see [S/PV.6343](#), [S/PV.6433](#), [S/PV.6558](#) and [S/PV.6680](#). For UNIFIL, see [S/PV.6373](#) and [S/PV.6600](#).

⁶⁰⁵ For more information on the mandate of UNDOF, see part X, sect. I, “Peacekeeping operations”.

⁶⁰⁶ For more information on the mandate of UNIFIL, see part X, sect. I, “Peacekeeping operations”.

⁶⁰⁷ Resolutions [1934 \(2010\)](#), [1965 \(2010\)](#), [1994 \(2011\)](#) and [2028 \(2011\)](#).

⁶⁰⁸ Resolutions [1937 \(2010\)](#) and [2004 \(2011\)](#).

⁶⁰⁹ [S/PRST/2010/12](#) and [S/PRST/2010/30](#).

⁶¹⁰ [S/PV.6572](#), p. 2 (United Kingdom); p. 3 (Germany); p. 3 (United States); and p. 4 (France).

⁶¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶¹² In the resolution, the Council, inter alia, demanded that Israel rescind its decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

⁶¹³ [S/PV.6572](#), pp. 5-7.

⁶¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

30 August 2010 and 30 August 2011: UNIFIL and resolution 1701 (2006)

On 30 August 2010, following the extension of the mandate of UNIFIL until 31 August 2011, the representative of Israel asserted that the most serious challenge to peace and security in Lebanon remained the military build-up of Hizbullah. He reiterated the commitment of Israel to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006), and emphasized the need, in accordance with resolution 1937 (2010), just adopted, to establish between the Blue Line and the Litani River an area free of any armed personnel, assets and weapons other than those of Lebanon and UNIFIL. Citing the incident of 3 August 2011 in which one Israeli officer was killed and another wounded by Lebanese gunfire, he called upon the Lebanese Armed Forces to respect the Blue Line in its entirety.⁶¹⁵ The representative of Lebanon stated that Israel was continuously violating its sovereignty through, inter alia, its occupation of Lebanese territory, such as in Al-Ghajar village and the Shab'a farms in Kafr Shuba. He emphasized Lebanon's commitment to enhancing coordination and cooperation with UNIFIL.⁶¹⁶

On 30 August 2011, following the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) until 31 August 2011, the representative of Israel noted that Hizbullah's continued military build-up, its exploitation of Lebanese civilians as human shields and its acts of violence targeting UNIFIL posed serious threats to peace and security in Lebanon, and that the Lebanese authorities bore particular responsibility for ending violations of resolution 1701 (2006). He stated that Israel expected the Government of Lebanon to prevent further provocative actions along the Blue Line, warning that such attacks carried serious potential for escalation.⁶¹⁷ The representative of Lebanon stated that the objective and terms of resolution 1701 (2006) were being constantly undermined by Israel's violations of its territory, airspace and waters. Lebanon encouraged the Secretary-General to intensify his diplomatic efforts to ensure that Israel withdrew from areas such as Al-Ghajar village and the Shab'a farms.⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵ S/PV.6375, p. 3.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

⁶¹⁷ S/PV.6605, pp. 2-3.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

27 April 2011 to 4 October 2011: briefings on the Syrian Arab Republic

On 27 April 2011, in his briefing to the Council, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs reported that anti-government demonstrations had started in the Syrian Arab Republic in mid-March, following the detention in Dar'a of 15 schoolchildren for writing anti-government graffiti. He noted that demonstrations had since gradually but steadily increased in geographic scope and participation, and that initial demands for greater freedom and political and economic reform were increasingly turning into calls for the downfall of the regime. The Syrian authorities had reacted with a mix of reform measures and increasingly violent repression, including in towns such as Dar'a and Homs, with reports of more than 300 demonstrators reportedly being killed by security forces, as well as wide-scale arrests, torture and detention of protestors and others. Although the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had reported that most of the killings of civilians had been committed by anti-government armed militias, no evidence had been provided.⁶¹⁹ In the discussion that followed, most Council members expressed deep concern regarding the deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. Several Council members explicitly called upon the regime to end its violent repression immediately.⁶²⁰ Other Council members noted the Government's announcement of reforms and expressed hope that both parties would engage in an inclusive political dialogue.⁶²¹ The representative of the Russian Federation, while expressing his concern regarding the increasing tension and confrontation in the Syrian Arab Republic that had claimed victims on both sides, asserted that the current situation in the country did not present a threat to international peace and security.⁶²² The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that the ongoing violence was being perpetrated by extremist groups whose goal was the fall of his Government. Outlining his Government's various reform efforts, which aimed to respond to legitimate popular demands, and describing the efforts by the Syrian authorities to exercise utmost restraint,

⁶¹⁹ S/PV.6524, pp. 2-4.

⁶²⁰ Ibid., p. 4 (United States); p. 5 (United Kingdom); p. 5 (France); p. 6 (Germany); and p. 8 (Gabon).

⁶²¹ Ibid., p. 7 (China); p. 8 (India); p. 9 (Brazil); pp. 9-10 (Nigeria); p. 10 (Bosnia and Herzegovina); p. 10 (Portugal); and p. 11 (Colombia).

⁶²² Ibid., p. 7

he stated that these groups had continued to kill innocent citizens and members of the security forces, and were intent on overthrowing his Government through killing and chaos. He stated that his country was currently the target of a conspiracy by external parties, including the United States. He stated that the Government was defending its people from seditious plots by its enemies, and therefore there was no justification for the Council's discussion focusing on what was essentially an internal affair of his country.⁶²³

On 3 August 2011, the Council adopted a statement by the President in which it expressed its grave concern at the deteriorating situation in the Syrian Arab Republic and, *inter alia*, called upon the Syrian authorities to alleviate the humanitarian situation in crisis areas by ceasing the use of force against affected towns, to allow unhindered access for international humanitarian agencies and workers.⁶²⁴ Immediately following the adoption of the statement, the representative of Lebanon disassociated her country from it, stating that Lebanon did not believe that it helped to address the current situation in the country.⁶²⁵

On 4 October 2011, the Council voted on a draft resolution⁶²⁶ in which the Council, *inter alia*, demanded that Syrian authorities immediately cease violations of human rights and the use of force against civilians, and expressed its intention to review the implementation of the resolution within 30 days and to consider its options, including measures under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations. It was not adopted owing to the negative vote of a permanent member. Explaining his delegation's position in opposition to the draft resolution, the representative of the Russian Federation stated that his delegation had been working with several other Council members on a separate draft resolution which emphasized, *inter alia*, respect for the national sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as well as the principle of non-intervention in its affairs. However, the draft resolution voted upon had been based on a philosophy of confrontation, containing an unacceptable threat of an ultimatum and sanctions against the Syrian authorities. Reflecting on the

Council's recent experience in Libya, and expressing alarm at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) interpretation and implementation of Council resolutions regarding the situation in that country, he pointed out that the demand for a quick ceasefire had turned into a full-fledged civil war, with consequences that transcended Libyan borders. He expressed the view that the best way to end the crisis was through an inclusive intra-Syrian political process supported by the international community.⁶²⁷ The representative of China, explaining his delegation's negative vote, asserted that the international community should provide constructive assistance to facilitate the achievement of a Syrian-led inclusive political process and should fully respect the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic. Regarding the draft resolution voted upon, his delegation believed that sanctions or the threat thereof did not help to resolve the crisis and might further complicate the situation, and therefore it had voted against it.⁶²⁸ Several Council members expressed regret that the draft resolution had not been adopted despite efforts to gain broad support for the text.⁶²⁹ The representative of the United States expressed outrage that the Council had utterly failed to address a growing threat to regional peace and security. The arguments against strong Council action were growing weaker by the day, with the Syrian regime continuing its atrocities despite promises of reform. She stated that while there had been efforts by several Council members and regional organizations to stop the bloodshed, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had refused to meet its international obligations. By failing to adopt the draft resolution, the Council had squandered an opportunity to shoulder its responsibilities to the Syrian people.⁶³⁰ The representative of France stated that it would continue its efforts both in the Council and within the European Union, along with all its partners, to ensure that the rights of the Syrian people were recognized and respected, so that those responsible for the violence could one day be brought to justice.⁶³¹ The representative of the United Kingdom stated that some

⁶²³ *Ibid.*, pp. 11-13.

⁶²⁴ [S/PRST/2011/16](#).

⁶²⁵ [S/PV.6598](#), pp. 2-3.

⁶²⁶ [S/2011/612](#).

⁶²⁷ [S/PV.6627](#), pp. 3-5.

⁶²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3 (France); p. 5 (Portugal); p. 7 (United Kingdom); p. 9 (United States); and p. 10 (Germany).

⁶³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-9.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Council members had made bilateral attempts to engage the Syrian leadership, and that each time the Government had promised reform but failed to deliver. The onus was now on the countries that had blocked the adoption of the draft resolution to step up their efforts to persuade the Government to end the violence and pursue genuine reform.⁶³² The representative of India stated that while it recognized the responsibility of all States to respect the fundamental rights of their people, States also had the obligation to protect their citizens from armed groups and militants, and therefore could not but take appropriate action when heavily armed military groups resorted to violence against the State authority and infrastructure.⁶³³ The representative of South Africa, in explaining his delegation's abstention in the draft resolution, expressed concern

⁶³² Ibid., p. 7.

⁶³³ Ibid., p. 6.

about the sponsors' intention to impose punitive measures and also that it not be part of a hidden agenda to institute regime change.⁶³⁴ The representative of the Syrian Arab Republic stated that there were certain States that were leading the international campaign to intervene in his country under the pretext of human rights and the protection of civilians. Not only did such countries continue to reject the existence of armed terrorists groups within his country, but were also protecting and sponsoring the leaders of those groups. The sponsors of the draft resolution, he asserted, were seeking to lead the entire world into a new colonial era and military adventures that were doomed to fail. Those very States had led the whole world into two world wars that had claimed millions of lives.⁶³⁵

⁶³⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

⁶³⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

Meetings: the situation in the Middle East

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
United Nations Disengagement Observer Force						
6352 30 June 2010	Report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2010 (S/2010/296)	Draft resolution (S/2010/346)				Resolution 1934 (2010) 15-0-0 S/PRST/2010/12
6462 22 December 2010	Report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2010 (S/2010/607)	Draft resolution submitted by Austria, Japan, United States (S/2010/650)				Resolution 1965 (2010) 15-0-0 S/PRST/2010/30
6572 30 June 2011	Report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF for the period from 1 January to 30 June 2011 (S/2011/359)	Draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Portugal, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States (S/2011/385)	Israel, Syrian Arab Republic		7 Council members (China, France, Germany, Lebanon, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States),	Resolution 1994 (2011) 15-0-0

**Part I. Consideration of questions under the responsibility of
the Security Council for the maintenance of
international peace and security**

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
					all invitees	
6693 21 December 2011	Report of the Secretary-General on UNDOF for the period from 1 July to 31 December 2011 (S/2011/748)	Draft resolution submitted by Russian Federation and United States (S/2011/779)				Resolution 2028 (2011) 15-0-0
United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon and resolution 1701 (2006)						
6375 30 August 2010	Letter dated 11 August 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/430)	Draft resolution submitted by Belgium, France, Italy, Spain, United States (S/2010/454) Thirteenth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2010/352)	Belgium, Israel, Italy, Spain		Lebanon, Israel	Resolution 1937 (2010) 15-0-0
6605 30 August 2011	Letter dated 5 August 2011 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2011/488)	Draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Italy, Spain, United States (S/2011/545)	Israel, Italy, Spain		1 Council member (Lebanon), Israel	Resolution 2004 (2011) 15-0-0
Syrian Arab Republic						
6524 27 April 2011			Syrian Arab Republic	Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs	All Council members, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs	
6598 3 August 2011					1 Council member (Lebanon)	S/PRST/2011/16
6627 4 October 2011		Draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Portugal, United Kingdom (S/2011/612)	Syrian Arab Republic		12 Council members ^a	Draft resolution not adopted (S/2011/612) 9-2-4 ^b

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
Yemen						
6634		Draft resolution submitted by France, Germany, Portugal, United Kingdom, United States				Resolution 2014 (2011)
21 October 2011		(S/2011/651)				15-0-0

^a Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Germany, India, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom, United States.

^b For: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, France, Gabon, Germany, Nigeria, Portugal, United Kingdom, United States; against: China, Russian Federation; abstaining: Brazil, India, Lebanon, South Africa.

28. The situation concerning Iraq

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held 16 meetings, including 2 closed meetings, in connection with the situation concerning Iraq, adopting five resolutions (three under Chapter VII of the Charter) and three presidential statements.

During the course of the meetings held under the item, the Council was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) on the activities of UNAMI and on the political and security situation in Iraq, including preparations for the national parliamentary elections and subsequent efforts to form a national government. The Council also heard briefings pursuant to resolution 1905 (2009), in which the Council, inter alia, requested that both the Secretary-General and the Government of Iraq provide details on progress made in strengthening the financial and administrative oversight of the Development Fund for Iraq, and that the Secretary-General provide details on the legal issues and options to be considered to implement successor arrangements.

From 2010 to 2011, the Council renewed the mandate of UNAMI twice for a period of one year each time.⁶³⁶

26 February and 12 November 2010: adoption of a presidential statement concerning steps taken by Iraq to comply with non-proliferation and disarmament regimes

On 26 February 2010, the Council adopted a presidential statement in which it, inter alia, welcomed the letter dated 18 January 2010 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq confirming that the Government of Iraq supported the international non-proliferation regime and complied with disarmament treaties and other relevant international instruments, and underlined the importance of Iraq ratifying the Additional Protocol to its comprehensive safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, which it had signed in 2008. The Council also underlined its readiness, once the necessary steps had been taken, to review, with a view towards lifting, the restrictions in resolutions 687 (1991) and 707 (1991) related to weapons of mass destruction and civil nuclear activities.⁶³⁷

On 12 November 2010, the Council adopted a presidential statement in which it, inter alia, welcomed the agreement reached to form a national partnership government, and encouraged the leaders of Iraq to rededicate themselves to the pursuit of national reconciliation.⁶³⁸

⁶³⁶ Resolutions 1936 (2010) and 2001 (2011). For more information on the mandate of UNAMI, see part X, sect. II, "Political and peacebuilding missions".

⁶³⁷ S/PRST/2010/5.

⁶³⁸ S/PRST/2010/23.