

Table 2

Videoconferences: identical letters dated 19 January 2016 from the Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council (S/2016/53)

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
21 January 2021	S/2021/77	Letter dated 25 January 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
21 April 2021	S/2021/401	Letter dated 23 April 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 May 2021	S/2021/449	Letter dated 11 May 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2574 (2021) 15-0-0 S/2021/457

Asia

14. The situation in Afghanistan

During the period under review, the Council held six meetings under the item entitled “The situation in Afghanistan”. Two meetings were convened for the adoption of a decision, three took the form of a briefing and one took the form of a debate.⁵³² More information on the meetings, including on the participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in table 1 below. Council members also held two open videoconferences in connection with the situation in Afghanistan.⁵³³ More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition, Council members held informal consultations of the whole to discuss the item.⁵³⁴

In 2021, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) provided quarterly briefings in meetings and open videoconferences in connection with the reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.⁵³⁵ Against the backdrop of the takeover of the country by the Taliban in August, the

Council heard additional briefings by the Special Representative and the Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission at one meeting,⁵³⁶ and by the Secretary-General at another.⁵³⁷ In addition, Council members heard a briefing by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in an open videoconference⁵³⁸ and briefings by five civil society representatives in meetings and open videoconferences.⁵³⁹ A representative of Afghanistan also delivered statements in four meetings and two videoconferences.⁵⁴⁰

At the outset of 2021, on 23 March, Council members held an open videoconference.⁵⁴¹ In addition to the briefing by the Special Representative, Council members heard a briefing by the Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. During her briefing, the Special Representative reported

⁵³² For more information on the format of meetings, including high-level meetings and videoconferences, see part II, sect. II.

⁵³³ For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II, sect. I, and *Repertoire, Supplement 2020*, part II, sect. I.

⁵³⁴ See [A/76/2](#), part II, chap. 8.

⁵³⁵ [S/2021/252](#), [S/2021/570](#), [S/2021/759](#) and [S/2021/759/Corr.1](#).

⁵³⁶ See [S/PV.8831](#).

⁵³⁷ See [S/PV.8834](#).

⁵³⁸ See [S/2021/601](#).

⁵³⁹ The Council heard briefings by the Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission on 23 March (see [S/2021/291](#)); the Executive Director of the Afghan Women’s Network on 22 June (see [S/2021/601](#)); the founder of the Women and Peace Studies Organization and the co-founder and Board Chair of the Malala Fund on 9 September (see [S/PV.8853](#)); and the Director of Charmaghz on 17 November (see [S/PV.8908](#)).

⁵⁴⁰ See [S/2021/291](#), [S/2021/601](#), [S/PV.8831](#), [S/PV.8834](#), [S/PV.8853](#) and [S/PV.8908](#).

⁵⁴¹ See [S/2021/291](#).

that progress on the negotiations in Doha had slowed and that Afghans and their international partners had begun to voice understandable frustration about the lack of real outcomes. She noted that, as talks continued, many stakeholders were increasingly looking to the United Nations to play a more prominent role. She welcomed the appointment by the Secretary-General of a new Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues to complement the work of the United Nations on regional engagement. She acknowledged that Member States had played a vital role in coming up with new initiatives to reinvigorate the peace process, cautioning that such initiatives must be focused and coherent. In that regard, she emphasized the need to look to the future of the country and to take into account the views of all Afghans, including women, youth, ethnic minorities and victims of war. She expressed concern about the deepening humanitarian crisis, urging Member States to contribute generously to the humanitarian response plan. Concerning the security situation, the Special Representative cautioned that developments in Afghanistan did not affect only Afghans but rather the global community, giving as an example the threats posed by the cultivation of and trafficking in illegal narcotics and transnational terrorism to the stability in Afghanistan and the region. In closing, she expressed hope that real progress would be achieved by the time of the following briefing, which would be given after the proposed date for the withdrawal of international troops under the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan between the United States of America and the Taliban.

In her briefing, the Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission reported that, since the talks in Doha had begun, violence towards Afghans had intensified and the public had lost hope in the process. She urged the Council not to look the other way as members pushed towards a peace deal doomed to fail. She emphasized that building peace took more than a deal among elites and that it must be an inclusive national endeavour, which would include women, minorities, youth, civil society, victims, the Afghan media and religious, regional and ethnic groups. In that regard, she stressed that a minimum of 30 per cent of the participants in the talks should be women. She said that the talks should be aimed at addressing human rights and victims' rights and that any peace agreement should include a robust reparations programme, reconciliation initiatives, a truth-seeking process, memorialization and victim recognition. In closing, she said that the Council would be fulfilling its historic mandate if it ensured a process that was more likely to end the violence and deliver a just and durable peace in Afghanistan.

In the subsequent discussion, Council members and other participants reaffirmed their support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process⁵⁴² and gave their support to recent international and United Nations efforts to reinvigorate the peace process while emphasizing that all support should build upon the talks in Doha in a sustained and cohesive way.⁵⁴³ Several speakers⁵⁴⁴ welcomed the outcomes of the meeting of the extended troika held in Moscow prior to the videoconference. Commenting on the international support for the negotiations, participants⁵⁴⁵ also welcomed the Secretary-General's appointment of a new Personal Envoy on Afghanistan and Regional Issues the week prior to the videoconference. Many Member States⁵⁴⁶ called for an immediate ceasefire. Some Member States⁵⁴⁷ recalled the Council's statement to the press dated 12 March, in which it underlined that the targeted killings of civilians could constitute war crimes, and noted that they must stop.

On 22 June, Council members held a high-level open videoconference.⁵⁴⁸ In addition to the briefing by the Special Representative, Council members heard briefings by the Executive Director of UNDOC and the Executive Director of the Afghan Women's Network. In her briefing, the Special Representative reported that trends related to politics, security, the peace process, the economy, the humanitarian emergency and the COVID-19 pandemic were all negative or stagnant. She expressed regret that actions on the battlefield had been far greater than progress at the negotiating table, contrary to the hope that the withdrawal of international troops would provide the opportunity for parties to the conflict to come together and find a path to peace. On the advances by the Taliban, she noted that they were positioning themselves to try and take the provincial capitals once foreign forces had fully withdrawn, adding that the military campaign ran directly counter to the statements by the head of the Taliban Political

⁵⁴² China, France, India, Kenya, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Kazakhstan and Qatar.

⁵⁴³ Kenya, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United States, Germany, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Qatar and Turkey.

⁵⁴⁴ China, Mexico, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Afghanistan.

⁵⁴⁵ Estonia, France, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United States, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Germany, Italy, Japan, Qatar and Turkey.

⁵⁴⁶ China, Estonia, France, India, Mexico, Viet Nam, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey.

⁵⁴⁷ Estonia, France, India, Ireland and Germany.

⁵⁴⁸ See [S/2021/601](#).

Commission. She also reported that civilian casualties had increased by 29 per cent in the first quarter of 2021 compared with the same period the previous year, with an increase in women and children casualties. She stressed the need to put victims and their needs at the forefront of negotiations and recalled that increased conflict in Afghanistan meant increased insecurity for many other countries, near and far.

Following the Special Representative's briefing, the Executive Director of UNODC focused on the importance of a well-integrated and balanced strategy to counter the illicit drug trade as a cornerstone to achieving an Afghanistan at peace. In that regard, she elaborated on the integrated mandates of UNODC in support of the Government in relation to drugs, crime, corruption and terrorism. She expressed readiness to increase the assistance by UNODC on a series of key aspects, such as enabling more farmers to shift to viable, licit crops, making evidence-based prevention and treatment a priority, urging the Government of Afghanistan and donors to devote greater resources and increase operational capabilities to disrupt drug trafficking, ensuring that counter-narcotics responses went hand-in-hand with actions to tackle corruption, strengthening regional cooperation to protect people and ensuring that all support efforts advanced the hard-won gains made by women and girls in Afghanistan.

Council members also heard a briefing by the Executive Director of the Afghan Women's Network, who reported that, since the release of the report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team that had been shared with the Council in April, violence had increased and had claimed the precious lives of several hundreds, the majority of whom were professional women and schoolchildren and youth. She underscored that a ceasefire should not be the goal of the peace talks but that it should pave the way for the peace process. In that context, she underscored that the United Nations at the highest level, including the Council, must compel the Taliban and the Government of Afghanistan to commit to a permanent ceasefire. Finally, she emphasized that a politically stable, economically empowered and self-reliant Afghanistan, where the rule of law, justice and human rights were respected and citizens' rights were protected and guaranteed, would benefit the region and the world.

Following the briefings, Council members and other participants⁵⁴⁹ expressed continued concern for

⁵⁴⁹ Estonia, Ireland, United Kingdom, China, France, Kenya, Mexico, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Viet Nam, Australia, Germany, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Japan, Poland and Turkey.

the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and condemned the increasing terrorist attacks and violence against civilians, including children, humanitarian workers, minorities and women. Several participants⁵⁵⁰ also reiterated that it was crucial to ensure that Afghanistan was not used again by terrorist groups or as a centre for illicit drug production and trafficking. A few Council members⁵⁵¹ noted that the situation in Afghanistan had reached a critical juncture as international forces were withdrawing from the country, while others⁵⁵² underscored the importance of international troops withdrawing in a responsible, orderly and coordinated manner. The representative of the United States stressed that the withdrawal of all United States troops from Afghanistan, announced by the President of the United States in April, was not a decision that had been taken lightly and that it had been made after close consultation with allies and partners. She also stressed that the commitment of the United States to the safety and security of Afghanistan endured. On the peace process, many participants⁵⁵³ noted that all relevant parties, including the Taliban, would need to constructively engage in the peace negotiations towards a political settlement and ceasefire, and some⁵⁵⁴ reiterated the need to support an inclusive process, in particular the need to ensure the meaningful participation of women in the negotiations.

On 6 August, the Council held a meeting⁵⁵⁵ at which it heard briefings by the Special Representative and the Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. The Special Representative reported that the war in Afghanistan had entered a new, deadlier and more destructive phase and that, during June and July, the Taliban had achieved significant territorial gains in their campaign to capture rural areas and had begun to attack the larger cities. She provided evidence of the human toll and the civilian casualties and noted that threatening large urban areas appeared to be a strategic decision by the Taliban, who had accepted the likely carnage that would ensue. She added that the suffering caused by the war came on top of an already increasing humanitarian crisis. Recalling both the Agreement for Bringing Peace to Afghanistan

⁵⁵⁰ Ireland, United States, France, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁵⁵¹ Norway, China and Tunisia.

⁵⁵² China, Mexico and Pakistan.

⁵⁵³ India, China, France, Mexico, Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Australia, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran and Kazakhstan.

⁵⁵⁴ Estonia, Ireland, India, United States, Norway, France, Kenya, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Italy, Japan, Poland and Turkey.

⁵⁵⁵ See [S/PV.8831](#).

between the United States of America and the Taliban, signed in February 2020, and the talks between the Government of Afghanistan and the Taliban in September 2021, she noted that there had been an expectation to see a reduction in violence, which did not happen. In reference to her contact with Afghans, she described having the impression that the population was waiting apprehensively for a dark shadow to pass over the bright futures they had once imagined. In that regard, she said that Afghans expected far greater engagement and visible support from the Council, adding that the statement to the press dated 3 August, in which the Council condemned the attack against the United Nations office in Herat and called again for an end to the violence and a resumption of a meaningful peace process, had been greatly appreciated. The Special Representative mentioned that there were several important opportunities in the near future through which words and actions could help to bring an end to the war. First, she called on the Council to issue an unambiguous statement that attacks against cities must stop. Second, she said that those countries that met with the Taliban Political Commission should insist in those meetings on a general ceasefire and a resumption of the negotiations and that a Government imposed by force in Afghanistan would not be recognized. Third, any extension of the travel ban exemption for the Taliban to travel for peace negotiations should be predicated on real progress on peace. Fourth, in the absence of a ceasefire, the Council and those States that met with the Taliban must urge them to grant humanitarian access to areas they controlled and commit to humanitarian ceasefires in contested areas. Fifth, she emphasized the need to put on notice the architects and perpetrators of the most serious violations of human rights. The Special Representative highlighted the strong support of UNAMA for greater efforts by the United Nations and the regional and international communities to find ways to hold the perpetrators accountable. Finally, she stated that the Council should give serious consideration to providing the United Nations with a mandate that would allow it to play a greater role in facilitating the negotiations.

The Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission provided a briefing about the ongoing conflict and the violations of international humanitarian law in Afghanistan. Advances by the Taliban and an escalation in violence meant that the Commission was verifying details of horrific war crimes on a daily basis. In addition to daily violations of the laws of conflict, she reported that the country's human rights gains were under attack and rapidly shrinking as the conflict expanded. She singled out as a

deeply concerning example the rights of women and girls in areas captured by the Taliban. The situation was equally concerning regarding access to information and freedom of expression. Affirming that the violence did not need to continue, she said that the Council and its members still had the leverage to stop the bloodshed of Afghans and prevent catastrophes. In that regard, she urged the Council, the United Nations and international human rights mechanisms to respond with a greater sense of urgency to the Afghan calls for civilian protection, a ceasefire, an end to the violence and a meaningful and inclusive political process. With regard to the call for a fact-finding mission to investigate the targeted killings of civilians in Afghanistan, she stressed that some of the most important things that such a mission would offer the Afghan people included acting as a preventive mechanism and highlighting the urgency of the threat to civilians. It would also keep victims and civilians centre stage as Afghanistan headed towards a human rights and humanitarian crisis post-withdrawal, while establishing the facts, identifying perpetrators and preserving evidence with a view to ensuring accountability. As part of the fact-finding mission, remedies for victims could also be proposed and effective prevention mechanisms could be established.

Speaking ahead of the Council members, the representative of Afghanistan asked the Council and the international community to take preventive measures to avert a catastrophic situation, including the convening of a special session of the Security Council and the Human Rights Council, and further requested the Council and the Secretary-General to provide support to the ongoing peace talks and the regional and international meetings in Doha. Many Council members reiterated that there was no military solution to the situation,⁵⁵⁶ and several Council members also underscored that the international community would not recognize or support a Taliban Government that came to power by force.⁵⁵⁷

At an emergency meeting held on 16 August⁵⁵⁸ the Council heard a briefing by the Secretary-General, who urged all parties – especially the Taliban – to exercise the utmost restraint to protect lives and to ensure that humanitarian needs could be met. He focused on two main aspects: first, on the need to speak with one voice to uphold human rights in

⁵⁵⁶ Norway, Estonia, United States, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Ireland, United Kingdom and China.

⁵⁵⁷ Norway, Estonia, United States and United Kingdom.

⁵⁵⁸ See [S/PV.8834](#).

Afghanistan, and second, on the need for the international community to make sure that Afghanistan was never again used as a platform or safe haven for terrorist organizations. In that regard, he appealed to the Council and the international community as a whole to stand together, work together, act together and use all tools at their disposal to suppress the global terrorist threat in Afghanistan and to guarantee that basic human rights would be respected. Looking ahead, he called for an immediate end to violence, for the rights of all Afghans to be respected and for Afghanistan to comply with all international agreements to which it was a party.

Speaking ahead of Council members, the representative of Afghanistan emphasized that mass executions of military personnel and targeted killings of civilians by the Taliban could not be allowed to happen in Kabul, which had been the last refuge for many people escaping violence and revenge attacks by the Taliban. He stressed that the Council and the Secretary-General should use every means at their disposal to call for an immediate cessation of violence and respect for human rights and international humanitarian law, and that the Council and the United Nations should not recognize any Administration that achieved power through force or any Government that was not inclusive and representative of the diversity of the country. Council members⁵⁵⁹ called for an immediate ceasefire and urged all parties to seek a negotiated political settlement and national reconciliation. Council members⁵⁶⁰ also emphasized the need to protect civilians and to allow safe and unhindered humanitarian access to continue to provide life-saving assistance to those in need in Afghanistan. In that context, several members⁵⁶¹ underscored that the Council needed to assume its responsibility and act to address and mitigate the consequences, including presenting a clear message and a unified front.

Two weeks later, on 30 August, the Council held a meeting⁵⁶² at which it adopted, not unanimously, resolution [2593 \(2021\)](#). In the resolution, the Council condemned in the strongest terms the deplorable attacks of August 26 near Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul.⁵⁶³ The Council further demanded that Afghan territory not be used to threaten or attack any

country or to shelter or train terrorists, or to plan or to finance terrorist acts.⁵⁶⁴ The Council also called for strengthened efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and called on all parties to allow full, safe and unhindered access for the United Nations and all humanitarian actors engaged in humanitarian relief activity.⁵⁶⁵ After the vote, the representatives of the United States and the United Kingdom focused on the achievements of the resolution adopted.⁵⁶⁶ The representative of France expressed regret that the text could not garner the support of all members of the Council. She said that she had no doubt, however, that Council members all shared the same primary objective of enabling the Afghan people to regain stability and security. The representative of Ireland acknowledged that her delegation would have preferred stronger language on the respect for human rights, particularly given the situation faced by the women and girls of Afghanistan, and called on all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law. The representative of the Russian Federation explained that his country abstained in the voting because the authors of the text ignored his delegation's principled concerns. First, despite the fact that the resolution had been proposed against the backdrop of a terrible terrorist attack, the penholders had categorically refused to mention internationally recognized terrorist organizations – Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) and the Eastern Turkistan Islamic Movement – in the paragraph on counter-terrorism. Second, the unacceptability of the negative impacts of the evacuation of qualified Afghan specialists on the Afghan economy had not been reflected in the text. Third, the authors had ignored proposals to include references to the harmful influence of the freezing of Afghan financial assets on the economic and humanitarian situation and the vital need to provide humanitarian assistance strictly in accordance with the guiding principles of the United Nations as enshrined in General Assembly resolution [46/182](#). Explaining his country's abstention, the representative of China said that his delegation had serious doubts about the necessity and urgency of the adoption of the resolution and about the balance of its content, adding that the important and reasonable amendments that his delegation had put forward together with the Russian Federation had not been fully adopted. He added that the recent chaos in Afghanistan was directly related to the hasty and disorderly withdrawal of foreign troops and expressed hope that the countries concerned would

⁵⁵⁹ Estonia, Norway, France, United Kingdom, Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Ireland, Mexico, Russian Federation, Viet Nam and China.

⁵⁶⁰ Estonia, Norway, United States, France, United Kingdom, Ireland, Mexico, Viet Nam and China.

⁵⁶¹ Norway, Ireland, Mexico and India.

⁵⁶² See [S/PV.8848](#).

⁵⁶³ Resolution [2593 \(2021\)](#), para. 1.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 2.

⁵⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, para. 3.

⁵⁶⁶ See [S/PV.8848](#).

realize that the withdrawal did not mean an end of their responsibility but the beginning of a process of reflection and correction.

On 9 September, the Council held a meeting⁵⁶⁷ in connection with the report of the Secretary-General.⁵⁶⁸ In addition to the briefing by the Special Representative, the Council heard briefings by the founder of the Women and Peace Studies Organization and by the co-founder and Board Chair of the Malala Fund, Malala Yousafzai.⁵⁶⁹ The Special Representative reported that the population of Kabul and the people of Afghanistan were confronted with a new and worrisome reality with the fall of the capital city on 15 August, which was followed by scenes of panic and chaos at the Kabul airport. Since many names listed in a de facto Administration announced by the Taliban were on the United Nations sanctions list, the Special Representative emphasized that all Council members would need to decide which steps to take regarding the sanctions list and the impact on future engagement. She further underscored that addressing the pre-existing humanitarian crisis could not wait for political decisions regarding the removal of sanctions and that relevant mechanisms must be found quickly to allow for the United Nations organizations and non-governmental organizations to provide the necessary humanitarian relief. She also drew attention to an additional looming crisis, in which billions of assets and donor funds had been frozen by members of the international community, of which the inevitable effect would be a severe economic downturn. She expressed disappointment at the lack of inclusivity of the so-called caretaker cabinet and concern about the growing number of incidents of harassment and intimidation against the national staff of UNAMA, about the credible allegations of reprisal killings of Afghan National Defence and Security Forces personnel and the detention of officials who worked for previous Administrations, and about the increasing violence used against Afghans protesting Taliban rule. With reference to the impact of the recent developments beyond the Afghan borders, the Special Representative noted the importance of the wider international community not becoming irrevocably divided, as there was now a more urgent agenda for regional and international cooperation around Afghanistan.

⁵⁶⁷ See [S/PV.8853](#). See also [S/2021/785](#). While briefers and Council members participated in person at the meeting, non-Council members submitted written statements. This was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁵⁶⁸ [S/2021/759](#) and [S/2021/759/Corr.1](#).

⁵⁶⁹ See [S/PV.8853](#).

The founder of the Women and Peace Studies Organization explained that she, along with her local network of women peacebuilders, had been working for local peace and conflict resolution for over a decade, including to promote the ceasefire and a national peace process. She reported that women's lives had been flipped around since 15 August and that thousands of women workers in non-governmental organizations were in hiding. She said that she still believed that the Council had the power, the ability and the responsibility to mitigate that damage and put forward four immediate requests. First, she asked the Council members engaging with the Taliban caretaker Government to remember that there were some 16 million or 17 million women and girls in Afghanistan, and therefore to include them in Council members' own mediation teams and to facilitate meetings of delegations of women across different professions – peacebuilders, judges, security officers, educators, doctors, businesswomen – with the Taliban. Second, noting that thousands of women and men from civil society, media personnel, former government employees, judges and prosecutors, artists and musicians were at risk of reprisal, she asked Council members to welcome them, grant them visas and give them a chance for a productive life. Third, in the light of the looming humanitarian crisis and the gender-segregated ideology of the Taliban regime, she said that it was imperative that the United Nations ensured the protection of Afghan female aid workers and other civic professionals and community organizers, adding that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other agencies must put in place a practical and clear gender-responsive aid plan. Finally, while the Taliban had asked for the world to be patient as they took charge, she encouraged Council members to ask the Taliban to fulfil their responsibility to protect and respect all Afghans regardless of age, sex or ethnicity. She concluded by asking Council members to put aside their political differences and act as one voice in support of the people and the women of Afghanistan.

In her briefing, Ms. Yousafzai focused on the experience of girls living under extremism and terrorism and on the impact of the most recent developments on their right to education. She called on the Council to protect Afghan girls and women and the future of the nation in four ways. First, she called on the Council to send a clear and unequivocal message to the Taliban that a fundamental condition of any working relationship was upholding girls' right to education. Second, the Council must build on resolution [2593 \(2021\)](#) by supporting a robust monitoring mechanism to track and monitor abuses of human rights. Third, the international community

needed to put that same resolution into action, with a significant increase in humanitarian and development assistance to the United Nations and international organizations so as to ensure that all schools could operate safely. Lastly, she emphasized that the United Nations presence was needed in every region of Afghanistan more than ever before. In that regard, she said that a strengthened mandate and resources for UNAMA and other United Nations agencies in Afghanistan were essential.

In the subsequent discussion, Council members⁵⁷⁰ reiterated their call on all parties to allow the safe and unhindered departure of Afghans and foreign nationals who wished to leave the country, noting the Taliban's commitment, and humanitarian access for United Nations humanitarian agencies and other actors providing assistance. With regard to governance, several Council members⁵⁷¹ expressed concern about the lack of inclusivity in the composition of the new interim Government announced by the Taliban. A number of Council members⁵⁷² called on the Taliban to pursue inclusive politics and an inclusive society while bearing in mind the interests of all segments of Afghan society. The representative of Afghanistan asked the Council to withhold any recognition of any Government in Afghanistan unless it was truly inclusive and formed on the basis of the free will of the people and urged Council members to draw a fundamental red line regarding the Taliban's treatment of women and girls and respect for the rights of all Afghans.

On 17 September, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2596 \(2021\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of UNAMA as defined in resolution [2543 \(2020\)](#) for six months.⁵⁷³ The Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a written report by 31 January 2022 on strategic and operational recommendations for the mandate of UNAMA in the light of the recent political, security and social developments, and to brief the Council on the situation in Afghanistan and the work of UNAMA every other month until 17 March 2022.⁵⁷⁴ Following the adoption of the resolution, several Council members provided explanations of their vote.⁵⁷⁵ While noting that the

collaborative effort had resulted in the renewal of the mandate of the Mission, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed regret that the final version of the resolution did not take into account an objective assessment of the threats in Afghanistan from ISIL/Da'esh or the long-standing drug problem. She expressed the expectation that such threats would be objectively reflected in the report of the Secretary-General to be presented to the Council in January 2022. The representative of Mexico underscored that unrestricted respect for international humanitarian law, in particular the protection of civilians, was essential and inescapable given the serious security situation that had taken shape in Afghanistan. That was why Mexico had insisted on an explicit mention of that subject. He expressed surprise that such a mention had not been included. Acknowledging that the text of the resolution did not capture all of the issues facing Afghanistan at such a time of upheaval, the representative of Ireland reiterated the central importance of upholding the country's obligations under international, humanitarian, refugee and human rights laws.

On 17 November, the Council held the last meeting of the year under the item.⁵⁷⁶ In addition to the briefing by the Special Representative, the Council heard a briefing by the Director of Charmaghz, a non-profit educational organization dedicated to children in Afghanistan. In her briefing, the Special Representative provided a general assessment of the de facto Taliban Administration based on the engagement with them over the previous three months and highlighted that formal interactions had been generally useful and constructive. However, she highlighted that the Taliban had made clear that there were limits to concessions they were willing to make on certain issues at the time and that they needed more time to clarify the policy on girls' right to education and its implementation. While the overall security situation had improved as the conflict had largely ended, UNAMA regularly received credible reports of incidents that were having an impact on the right to life and the physical integrity of Afghans. She reported that the Taliban's inability to curb the expansion of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant – Khorasan Province was another major negative development. The Special Representative further underscored that humanitarian assistance was not enough and that the international community needed urgently to find a way to provide financial support to health-care workers in State hospitals, to staff in food security programmes and eventually to teachers. She stated that the reality of the

⁵⁷⁰ Ireland, Estonia, Norway, United Kingdom, India, France, Mexico, Viet Nam and United States.

⁵⁷¹ Ireland, Norway, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), France and Mexico.

⁵⁷² Ireland, Estonia, Norway, United Kingdom, India, Russian Federation, Viet Nam and China.

⁵⁷³ Resolution [2596 \(2021\)](#), para. 3.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, para. 5. For more information on the mandate of UNAMA, see part X, sect. II.

⁵⁷⁵ See [S/PV.8862](#).

⁵⁷⁶ See [S/PV.8908](#).

situation threatened to heighten the risk of extremism, with the continued deterioration of the formal economy providing impetus to the informal economy, including illicit drugs, arms flows and trafficking in persons. She suggested that the best way to promote stability and future international support was for the Taliban to avoid the isolation that had characterized their previous experience in power, which would require a sustained and structured policy dialogue among the Taliban de facto authorities, other Afghan stakeholders, the wider region and the international community.

In her briefing, the Director of Charmaghz called on the United Nations to work with all stakeholders in the creation of a political structure that would allow for coexistence and an end to the cycle of war in which Afghanistan had been trapped for decades. She explained that exclusion and lack of power-sharing did not work in Afghanistan and pointed out that Afghanistan had an overly centralized political structure and system that the Taliban had inherited from the previous Government. Expressing that a new political system in which all could coexist could be created only through non-violent means and negotiations involving all groups, she stressed the need for a genuine global effort to turn the current moment into a window of opportunity for long-lasting peace. To that end, she urged the United Nations and friendly neutral Governments to play a leading role in bringing all stakeholders back under a Bonn Conference model, with the aim to ensure transitional justice through the model to create a political system that was acceptable to all and inclusive of all. She also urged all rival regional Powers, including India and Pakistan, but not limited to them, to bring the best versions of themselves, setting aside their regional rivalries, to genuinely work for peace. Lastly, she urged the global

community to support local actors, non-governmental organizations and associations working in Afghanistan.

Following the briefings, several Council members⁵⁷⁷ underscored that the re-establishment of basic services, especially health care and education, was vital, and highlighted the importance of girls' access and right to education. Furthermore, Council members and other participants⁵⁷⁸ drew attention to the economic situation in Afghanistan and expressed concern about the economic challenges, including the liquidity shortage and other economic factors hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan. A few speakers⁵⁷⁹ also highlighted the need to release Afghan frozen assets, which should not be politicized or made conditional. Council members also condemned the increasing number of terrorist attacks,⁵⁸⁰ and expressed the expectation that the Taliban and all parties in Afghanistan would make a clean break from terrorist groups and do their utmost to counter those groups.⁵⁸¹

Developments in Afghanistan were also considered under the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts".⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁷ Norway, Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), France, Ireland, United States and Mexico.

⁵⁷⁸ Viet Nam, United Kingdom, United States, Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan.

⁵⁷⁹ China and Islamic Republic of Iran.

⁵⁸⁰ Norway, Estonia, Viet Nam, Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Ireland and Mexico.

⁵⁸¹ Norway, China, France and United Kingdom.

⁵⁸² For more information, see sect. 28 below.

Table 1
Meetings: the situation in Afghanistan

<i>Meeting record 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>
S/PV.8831 6 August 2021			Afghanistan	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, Chair of the Afghanistan	12 Council members, ^a all invitees ^b	

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

<i>Meeting record 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>
				Independent Human Rights Commission		
S/PV.8834 16 August 2021			Afghanistan		Secretary- General, 12 Council members, ^c invitee	
S/PV.8848 30 August 2021		Draft resolution submitted by France, United Kingdom, United States (S/2021/762)			Seven Council members ^d	Resolution 2593 (2021) 13-0-2 ^e
S/PV.8853 and S/2021/785 9 September 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for peace and security (S/2021/759 and S/2021/759/Corr.1)		Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Turkey	Special Representative of the Secretary- General, founder of the Women and Peace Studies Organization, co-founder and Board Chair of the Malala Fund	12 Council members, ^f all invitees ^g	
S/PV.8862 17 September 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for peace and security (S/2021/759 and S/2021/759/Corr.1)	Draft resolution submitted by Estonia, Norway (S/2021/804)			Seven Council members ^h	Resolution 2596 (2021) 15-0-0
S/PV.8908 17 November 2021			Afghanistan, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Pakistan, Tajikistan	Special Representative of the Secretary- General, Director of Charmaghz	12 Council members, ^c all invitees ⁱ	

^a China, Estonia, India, Ireland, Mexico, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Norway, Russian Federation, United States and Viet Nam.

^b The Special Representative and the Chair of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission participated in the meeting by videoconference.

^c China, Estonia, India, Ireland, Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, United States and Viet Nam.

^d China, Estonia, France, Ireland, Russian Federation, United States and United Kingdom. India (President of the Council) was represented by its Foreign Secretary.

^e For: Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam; against: none; abstaining: China, Russian Federation.

^f China, Estonia, India, Ireland, Mexico, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia),

Norway, Russian Federation, United States and Viet Nam. Ireland (President of the Council) was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister for Defence.

^g The Special Representative, the founder of the Women and Peace Studies Organization and the co-founder and Board Chair of the Malala Fund participated in the meeting by videoconference.

^h China, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

^l The Special Representative and the Director of Charmaghz participated in the meeting by videoconference.

Table 2

Videoconferences: the situation in Afghanistan

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision, vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
23 March 2021	S/2021/291	Letter dated 25 March 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
22 June 2021	S/2021/601	Letter dated 24 June 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

15. The situation in Myanmar

During the period under review, the Council held three private meetings under the item entitled “The situation in Myanmar”. More information about the meetings is provided in table 1 below. In connection with the item, Council members also held one videoconference to announce the adoption of a presidential statement.⁵⁸³ More information on the videoconference is given in table 2 below. In addition, Council members held closed videoconferences in connection with the item.⁵⁸⁴

On 10 March, the Council adopted a presidential statement, in which it reiterated its deep concern at developments in Myanmar following the declaration of the state of emergency imposed by the military on 1 February and the arbitrary detention of members of the Government and called for their immediate release.⁵⁸⁵ The Council strongly condemned the violence against peaceful protestors and expressed deep concern at restrictions on medical personnel, civil society, journalists and labour union members. The Council called for the immediate release of all those detained arbitrarily and called for the military to

exercise utmost restraint.⁵⁸⁶ The Council also stressed the need to uphold democratic institutions and processes, refrain from violence, fully respect human rights and fundamental freedoms and uphold the rule of law.⁵⁸⁷ The Council further reiterated its strong support for regional organizations, in particular the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and welcomed the statements made by the Chair of ASEAN on 1 February and 2 March, in which the Chair had called on all parties to exercise utmost restraint and seek a peaceful solution through constructive dialogue and practical reconciliation in the interests of the people of Myanmar.⁵⁸⁸ The Council reiterated its support for the good offices of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General on Myanmar and encouraged her to maintain her efforts to engage intensively with all relevant parties in Myanmar and to visit Myanmar as soon as possible.⁵⁸⁹ The Council further noted that the situation in Myanmar had the potential to exacerbate existing challenges in Rakhine State and expressed concern that recent developments posed serious challenges for Rohingya refugees and internally displaced persons within the region.⁵⁹⁰ The Council also reaffirmed its strong commitment to the

⁵⁸³ [S/PRST/2021/5](#). For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II, sect. I, and *Repertoire, Supplement 2020*, part II, sect. I.

⁵⁸⁴ See [A/76/2, part II, chap. 32](#). See also [S/2021/1084](#).

⁵⁸⁵ [S/PRST/2021/5](#), first paragraph. In the presidential statement, the Council also recalled its statement to the press dated 4 February.

⁵⁸⁶ [S/PRST/2021/5](#), second paragraph.

⁵⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, third paragraph.

⁵⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, fourth paragraph.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, fifth paragraph.

⁵⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, sixth paragraph.