

22. The situation concerning Iraq

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting in relation to the item entitled “The situation concerning Iraq”, which took the form of a briefing.⁶⁴⁹ More information on this meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held a total of four open videoconferences in connection with this item. The Council unanimously adopted resolution [2522 \(2020\)](#), extending the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) until 31 May 2021.⁶⁵⁰ More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members held informal consultations of the whole to discuss this item.⁶⁵¹

In 2020, the Council heard regular briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on the situation concerning Iraq. In her four briefings further to the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General,⁶⁵² she informed Council members about the progress on the formation of a new Government and the preparation for elections in June 2021. She also spoke about the progress made regarding the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. The Special Representative also informed Council members about the vulnerable economic and security situation in Iraq, exacerbated by corruption, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued threat of terrorism by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da’esh). The Special Representative reported on the ongoing mass protests, emphasizing the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. She also spoke about the serious human rights violations and abuses and the pressing need for accountability and justice. The Special Representative continued to inform the Council regarding the relations between Baghdad and Erbil and the status of negotiations between the Kurdish Regional Government and the federal Government.

⁶⁴⁹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁶⁵⁰ For more information on the mandate of UNAMI, part X, sect. II.

⁶⁵¹ See [A/75/2](#), part II, chap. 29. See also [S/2020/344](#).

⁶⁵² [S/2020/140](#), [S/2020/363](#), [S/2020/792](#), and [S/2020/1099](#).

At the beginning of 2020, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General reported on the Prime Minister's announced resignation in late November 2019 and the failure of the designation of a new Prime Minister, as well as the subsequent challenges to form a new Government. She noted that the political uncertainty was eroding public trust. The Special Representative also highlighted that delivering on the demands of the people required a collective effort and that every single political actor and leader was fully responsible for restoring the critical confidence of the public in their Government and its institution. On the need for free, fair and credible elections, the Special Representative emphasized the importance of broad, fundamental systemic reform and a strong Independent High Electoral Commission and that the newly appointed Electoral Commission needed to demonstrate greater resolve in adhering to the principles of transparency, accountability, independence and professionalism. She stated that the volatile domestic and regional climate had taken an extraordinary toll on Iraq and that the state-to-state violence which had played out across Iraq earlier in the year was received as a clear and substantial threat to the country. The Special Representative affirmed that regional security developments should not eclipse domestic priorities and rightful demands for reform. The question was whether Iraq would flourish as a venue for peace and understanding or suffer as the arena of external battles.⁶⁵³

On 12 May 2020, against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Special Representative said that as the Iraqi health system was already near breaking point and that the first priority remained to prevent a rapid spread of the virus. She also echoed the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. The Special Representative reported to Council members on the recent formation of a new Government, with the confirmation by the Council of Representatives of Mustafa Al-Kadhimi as the new Prime Minister and approval of his Government programme and ministers. Welcoming the long overdue development, she called for the swift completion of the remaining vacant positions, including the appointment of more women and minority representatives. She also noted that the economic situation had laid bare Iraq's vulnerability due to the grave lack of economic diversification and reiterated the need to broaden Iraq's revenue base by reducing its oil dependence among others. She also addressed the

⁶⁵³ See [S/PV.8739](#).

impact of COVID-19 on humanitarian access, noting that many access requests remained unapproved and that a practical, long-term solution was urgently required. She also said that the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, and some of the activities had to be postponed.⁶⁵⁴

In her subsequent briefings to Council members, the Special Representative reported on the continued humanitarian challenges on the ground, and noted the increasing gender-based violence amid dwindling options for victims to seek assistance and find shelter. She called for a simplified system that enabled immobilized humanitarian actors and supplies to rapidly reach people in need while noting the hazardous conditions faced by humanitarian actors. The Special Representative also expressed concern with regards to the escalation in the Iraqi-Turkish border areas and urged both countries to resolve their differences through dialogue and cooperation with full respect for national sovereignty. She underlined the importance for Iraq to be given further room to focus on its domestic resilience instead of being used as a venue for different power struggles.⁶⁵⁵ The Special Representative reported that the Parliament had recently finalized necessary electoral legislation and that UNAMI was ramping up its technical assistance in line with its mandate. In that connection, she further emphasized that Iraq's electoral institutional capacity needed to be strengthened and asked the relevant authorities to step up and think in terms of solutions instead of obstacles. She also reaffirmed that electoral preparations needed to remain free from political interference at all stages and made reference to the letter from the Government to the Security Council with a request "to obtain more support, technical assistance and electoral observation within the framework of UNAMI support to Iraq".⁶⁵⁶

During the period under review, Council members reaffirmed their support to the work and mandate of UNAMI, particularly its technical electoral assistance and efforts to promote political dialogue and reconciliation, as well as its engagement with the Women's Advisory Group for Politics and National Reconciliation in Iraq.⁶⁵⁷ Some Council members called on the

⁶⁵⁴ See [S/2020/397](#).

⁶⁵⁵ See [S/2020/845](#).

⁶⁵⁶ See [S/2020/1144](#). See [S/2020/1130](#).

⁶⁵⁷ See [S/PV.8739](#), United States, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, France, South Africa and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; [S/2020/397](#), Dominican Republic, Niger, South Africa and United Kingdom.

Iraqi authorities to continue implementing the recommendations of UNAMI to build on the progress, and encouraged the new Government to work closely with the Mission.⁶⁵⁸ Council members also emphasized the importance of making progress on the political process and holding free, fair and inclusive elections in June 2021, and welcomed UNAMI's support, advice and technical assistance to Iraq in electoral preparations.⁶⁵⁹ Some Council members also expressed concerns over the use of force against demonstrators and human rights violations in the context of public demonstrations and stressed the importance of ensuring the right to peaceful protest and freedom of expression and holding those responsible accountable.⁶⁶⁰ On the new Iraqi Government, several Council members called for swift and effective action to implement reforms, including the participation of women and youth in Iraq's decision-making processes.⁶⁶¹ In that connection, some Council members spoke about the steady increase of gender-based violence cases, including domestic violence, and called on UNAMI to actively engage with civil society organizations to better address the issue and encouraged the Government to take concrete steps to ensure the protection of these victims.⁶⁶² Rejecting the attacks on the United States Embassy in Iraq and the Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Najaf, the representative of Iraq called on the Council to emphasize the need to respect Iraq's sovereignty, not to undermine its security and to assist its efforts to ensure stability.⁶⁶³ In his interventions, the representative of Iraq also emphasized the importance of non-interference and respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Iraq and establishing friendly relations and cooperation with its neighbours and the international community.⁶⁶⁴

On 29 May 2020, the Council extended the mandate of UNAMI through the unanimous adoption of resolution [2522 \(2020\)](#) until 31 May 2021.⁶⁶⁵ In the resolution, the Council

⁶⁵⁸ See [S/PV.8739](#), United Kingdom, France and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; [S/2020/397](#), United Kingdom.

⁶⁵⁹ See [S/2020/1144](#), for example, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, p. 15 Germany, p. Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam.

⁶⁶⁰ See [S/PV.8739](#), for example, Germany, United Kingdom, France, Estonia, Belgium, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

⁶⁶¹ See [S/2020/397](#), for example, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, South Africa and United Kingdom.

⁶⁶² Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa.

⁶⁶³ See [S/PV.8739](#).

⁶⁶⁴ See [S/PV.8739](#), [S/2020/397](#), [S/2020/845](#), and [S/2020/1144](#).

⁶⁶⁵ Resolution [2522 \(2020\)](#), para. 1. See letter from the permanent representative of Iraq dated 27 May 2020 ([S/2020/448](#)).

commended the Government of Iraq's efforts to plan and execute free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraq-owned elections, and welcomed the Government's request for further UN electoral advice, support and assistance in that regard.⁶⁶⁶ The Council decided that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNAMI would further advise, support and assist the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission with efforts to plan and execute free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraqi-owned elections and referenda, including through regular technical reviews and detailed reporting on electoral preparations and processes, as part of the Secretary-General's regular reporting cycle.⁶⁶⁷ The Council also decided that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, at the request of the Government of Iraq and taking into account the letter from the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iraq to the Secretary-General ([S/2020/448](#)), should prioritize the provision of advice, support, and assistance to the Government and people of Iraq on advancing inclusive, political dialogue and national and community-level reconciliation.⁶⁶⁸

In addition, developments in 2020 relating to the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh /Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant established pursuant to resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) were dealt with under the agenda item entitled "Threats to international peace and security".⁶⁶⁹

Table 1
Meetings: The situation concerning Iraq

⁶⁶⁶ Resolution [2522 \(2020\)](#), fifth preambular paragraph.

⁶⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, para. 2 (b). See letter from the permanent representative of Iraq dated 20 November 2020 ([S/2020/1130](#)).

⁶⁶⁸ Resolution [2522 \(2020\)](#), para. 2 (a).

⁶⁶⁹ For further details, see part I, sect. 34.

<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.8739 3 March 2020	Twenty-fifth report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2020/133) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2470 (2019) (S/2020/140)		Iraq	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq	All Council members, all invitees	

Table 2
Videokonferences: The situation concerning Iraq

<i>Videokonference date</i>	<i>Videokonference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
12 May 2020	S/2020/397	Letter dated 14 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
29 May 2020	S/2020/467	Letter dated 29 May 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	Resolution 2522 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/460 (Record of written procedure)
26 August 2020	S/2020/845	Letter dated 28 August 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
24 November 2020	S/2020/1144	Letter dated 27 November 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	