
During the period under review, the members of the Security Council held two open videoconferences in connection with Security Council resolutions 1160 (1998), 1199 (1998), 1203 (1998), 1239 (1999) and 1244 (1999).515 In a note by the President dated 7 February 2019,516 the Council expressed its intent to hold briefings on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) three times in 2019 and, as from 2020, to hold briefings twice a year, in April and October.517 Consistent with the note, at the two open videoconferences in 2020, Council members heard two briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, further to the Secretary-General’s reports pursuant to resolution 1244 (1999).518 In line with established practice, statements were also delivered by the representatives of Serbia and Kosovo during the two videoconferences.519 No decisions were adopted in connection with this item during the period under review. More information on the videoconferences is given in the table below.

The briefings of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General focused on the latest developments on the ground, particularly on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Kosovo as well as on the progress made in the relations between Pristina and Belgrade during the reporting period.

On 24 April 2020, the Special Representative stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had been an unprecedented challenge for Kosovo and for the region and a reminder that such challenges could be resolved only through regional cooperation. In that regard, he outlined the measures that had been put in place to curtail the spread of the disease and how UNMIK was working closely with the local public health authorities and with international partners in fighting

515 For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
516 See S/2019/120.
519 Serbia was represented by its First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs.
the pandemic.\textsuperscript{520} While regretting that political divisions had distracted the attention of many leaders away from the health crisis, he also highlighted examples of positive cross-community and cross-boundary coordination between Pristina and Belgrade across ethnic and political divides improving communication and coordination in dealing with the health crisis. Moreover, he stressed that the removal of the 100 per cent tariff on imports from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as of 1 April 2020, coupled with the introduction of reciprocity measures vis-à-vis Belgrade, marked a step towards resuming more regular commercial relations and a return towards the principles of the Central European Free Trade Agreement, which he viewed as an important signpost towards a restart of the political dialogue between the two capitals. Finally, the Special Representative welcomed the appointment by the European Union of a dedicated Special Representative charged with advancing the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue. He added that a coordinated international approach in support of the European Union-facilitated dialogue between Pristina and Belgrade would be essential and remained the best hope for reaching a comprehensive agreement and for sustaining peace.\textsuperscript{521}

During the discussion that ensued, Council members welcomed the positive developments during the reporting period, including the joint efforts by Belgrade and Pristina to contain the COVID-19 outbreak,\textsuperscript{522} as well as the lifting of tariffs on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.\textsuperscript{523} Council members also welcomed the appointment of the European Union Special Representative for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue and other Western Balkans regional issues\textsuperscript{524} and urged Belgrade and Pristina to resume dialogue with help from the European Union.\textsuperscript{525}

With regard to the role of UNMIK, a number of Council members expressed their support for the work of the Mission.\textsuperscript{526} More specifically, the representative of the Russian

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\textsuperscript{520} For further information on the mandate of UNMIK, see part X, sect. I.
\textsuperscript{521} \textit{S/2020/339}.
\textsuperscript{522} Ibid., Belgium, France, Germany, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.
\textsuperscript{523} Ibid., Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany and United Kingdom.
\textsuperscript{524} Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States.
\textsuperscript{525} Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States); and Viet Nam.
\textsuperscript{526} Ibid., China, Dominican Republic, France, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam.
Federation maintained that the Council should continue to support the Mission as it played a leading role for creating the conditions conducive to a negotiated solution. The representative of the United States reiterated that the Mission had fulfilled its original purpose and looked forward to working with other Council members to draw down UNMIK and determine a more relevant role for the United Nations in helping Kosovo and the Western Balkans realize their full potential. While expressing their recognition for the work of UNMIK, the representatives of Estonia and the United Kingdom also expressed their support for a strategic review of UNMIK.527 A number of speakers commended the initiatives of UNMIK to promote the participation of women in the peace process.528

On 21 October 2020, in his second briefing to the Council, the Special Representative opened his remarks by providing an overview of the different phases Kosovo had moved through during the COVID-19 pandemic, from stringent measures and lockdowns to a more relaxed approach, prioritizing economic recovery. He highlighted the obstacles faced by the government in responding to the rapidly spreading pandemic, including the severe socio-economic consequences endured by the population, particularly affecting youth as well as women and vulnerable communities. On the peace process, the Special Representative underscored that the removal of the reciprocity measures on goods from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had created an impetus for restarting the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina. That development had been accompanied by the appointment of the European Union’s new dedicated Special Representative and a high-level meeting hosted by the President of France and the Chancellor of Germany on 10 July 2020, which had led to the official resumption of the EU-facilitated dialogue. Similarly, the United States government had hosted a meeting at the White House in September 2020 during which agreements were signed by the parties in the economic and other spheres. Commending Belgrade and Pristina for resuming the negotiation process, the Special Representative called on both parties to maintain a constructive dialogue process despite challenges and differences of views. In the context of the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000), the Special Representative stressed the importance of women’s meaningful participation

527 Ibid., Estonia and United Kingdom.
528 Ibid., Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and United Kingdom.

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in the peace process at all levels, ensuring the broader representation of different sectors of society. The Special Representative also stated that important steps had been taken to advance the investigative and judicial processes of the Kosovo Specialist Prosecutor’s Office and the Kosovo Specialist Chambers concerning the filing of indictments against President Hashim Thaçi and the leader of the Democratic Party of Kosovo in June 2020. He added that the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office were integral parts of the Kosovo justice system, and urged the leaders to redouble their efforts to counter misinformation and to ensure that the Prosecution and Chambers’ proceedings received unambiguous institutional and political support, essential for strengthening the rule of law and long-term stability in Kosovo.529

During the discussion following the briefing, Council members broadly welcomed the resumption of dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina facilitated by the European Union, as well as the agreements on the normalization of economic relations signed under the auspices of the United States during 2020.530 In that connection, a number of speakers expressed support for the efforts of the European Union’s new dedicated Special Representative in advancing the political dialogue between the two capitals,531 with a few regretting that he had not been invited to participate at the meeting.532 The representative of the Russian Federation hoped that under the leadership of the new dedicated Special Representative, the European mediation would gain momentum and translate into progress towards resolving Kosovo’s problems. With regard to the rule of law and accountability, several Council members called for cooperation with the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and with the Specialist Prosecutor’s Office in the fight against impunity for perpetrators of serious crimes.533 The representative of the United Kingdom regretted the continuing slow progress in domestic prosecutions for war crimes, and urged Kosovo and Serbian authorities to work together in dealing with those crimes. Echoing the Special

529 See S/2020/1040.
530 Ibid., Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam.
531 Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, South Africa, Tunisia and United Kingdom.
532 Ibid., Belgium, France and Germany.
533 Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.
Representative, many speakers called for the greater participation of women and youth in the peace process.534

Council members also commended the work of UNMIK on several fronts, from its role in promoting security, stability and respect for human rights to its efforts to confront the COVID-19 pandemic in Kosovo, with some stressing the need for a review of the Mission, including an option for a drawdown.535 In that regard, the representative of the United States reiterated that while the United Nations could play an important role in furthering the development of democratic norms and institutions in the region, it did not require a Chapter VII-mandated mission to advance recognition, integration and normalization. She urged the Security Council members to begin taking the steps needed for a responsible drawdown to ensure a more relevant and effective role for the United Nations in helping Kosovo and the rest of the Western Balkans realize its full potential.


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<td>S/2020/339</td>
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534 Ibid., Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa.
535 Ibid., United Kingdom and United States.