

Middle East

20. The situation in the Middle East

During the period under review, the Security Council held 17 meetings in relation to the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East”. Consistent with prior practice, most meetings held under this item took the form of briefings.⁵⁴² More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the tables below. In addition, the Council held a total of 31 open videoconferences in connection with this item.⁵⁴³ More information on videoconferences is given in the tables below. Under this item, both at meetings and videoconferences, Council members considered a variety of topics, principally, the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic; the conflict in Yemen; the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF); and the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). In 2020, the Council also held three closed videoconferences with countries contributing troops and police to the UNDOF and UNIFIL.⁵⁴⁴ In addition to the meetings and videoconferences, Council members held informal consultations of the whole and an informal interactive dialogue to discuss this item.⁵⁴⁵

In 2020, the Council adopted a total of eight resolutions in connection with this item. The Council extended twice the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA), on 13 January 2020 for six months until 15 July 2020,⁵⁴⁶ and on 14 July 2020 for one year until 15 July 2021.⁵⁴⁷ On 25 February 2020, the Council renewed the sanctions measures in relation to the situation in Yemen until 26 February 2021 and extended the mandate

⁵⁴² For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁵⁴³ For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁵⁴⁴ In connection with the item entitled “Meeting of the Security Council with the troop-and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#), annex II, sections A and B”, Council members held a closed videoconference on 15 June and 8 December 2020 in relation to UNDOF and on 10 August 2020 in relation to UNIFIL; see [A/75/2](#), part II, chap. 22. See also [S/2020/789](#) and [S/2020/1045](#).

⁵⁴⁵ See [A/75/2](#), part II, chap. 2.B. See also [S/2020/258](#); [S/2020/1142](#); [S/2020/344](#); [S/2020/1102](#) and [S/2021/9](#).

⁵⁴⁶ Resolution [2505 \(2020\)](#), para. 1.

⁵⁴⁷ Resolution [2534 \(2020\)](#), para. 1.

of the Panel of Experts for 13 months until 28 March 2021.⁵⁴⁸ The Council also renewed twice the mandate of UNDOF for periods of six months each,⁵⁴⁹ and extended the mandate of UNIFIL once for a period of 12 months, also authorizing a reduction in the maximum number of authorized troops from 15,000 to 13,000.⁵⁵⁰ The Council failed to adopt four draft resolutions in relation to the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic.⁵⁵¹ As elaborated below, two draft resolutions were not adopted due to the negative vote of one or more permanent members, and the remaining two were not adopted due to the failure to obtain the required number of votes.

During the period under review, the meetings and videoconferences in relation to the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continued to focus on three main aspects: the political process to end the conflict; the humanitarian situation in the country; and the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. Following the practice in 2019, briefings concerning the political process and the humanitarian situation in Syria were sometimes addressed jointly during the same meeting or videoconference whereas the proliferation and use of chemical weapons was addressed separately in dedicated meetings and open videoconferences.⁵⁵²

Regarding the political process, Council members heard regular monthly briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, the Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, and the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs on the efforts to reach a political solution to the conflict and the implementation of resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). In this connection, in 2020, the briefings and discussions focused on the progress of the Constitutional Committee, the Special Envoy's continued engagement with key international stakeholders, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the socioeconomic and political situations in Syria.⁵⁵³ In February 2020, against the backdrop of the military hostilities in north-west Syria and the escalation of violence in Idlib, the Special Envoy reported that despite the ceasefire, heavy clashes and mutual shelling continued between Turkish forces and Syrian

⁵⁴⁸ Resolution [2511 \(2020\)](#), paras. 2 and 7.

⁵⁴⁹ Resolutions [2530 \(2020\)](#), para. 15; and [2555 \(2020\)](#), para. 15.

⁵⁵⁰ Resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#), paras. 1 and 29.

⁵⁵¹ See [S/2020/654](#), [S/2020/658](#), [S/2020/667](#) and [S/2020/683](#).

⁵⁵² For more information on the format of meetings in relation to this item, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2019* and *Supplement 2018*, part II, sect. I.

⁵⁵³ See [S/PV.8475](#), [S/PV.8520](#), [S/PV.8609](#), and [S/PV.8493](#).

Government forces inside Syria. Reiterating the Secretary-General's strong appeal for a cessation of hostilities, he called for an end to the hostilities and on everyone to engage in a serious international effort to cooperate on Idlib and called on all major players and the members of the Council to put their full weight behind that logic.⁵⁵⁴ At the 8738th meeting held on 28 February 2020, the Secretary-General expressed deep concerns about the changing nature of the conflict in Idlib and reiterated the need for a ceasefire.⁵⁵⁵ Furthermore, following the Secretary-General's call for an immediate global ceasefire since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria said that different ceasefire arrangements broadly continued to hold across Syria.⁵⁵⁶ He also reported on the progress of his engagements with the co-Chairs of the Constitutional Committee and the Syria Women's Advisory Board, as well as on the issue of detainees, abductees and missing persons, appealing to the Syrian Government and all other Syrian parties to unilaterally release detainees and abductees.⁵⁵⁷ During his briefings, the Special Envoy informed the Council about the progress of the Constitutional Committee and its agenda, with a focus on preparing and drafting a constitutional reform and gradually developing a wider political process to implement resolution [2254 \(2015\)](#). Two civil society representatives briefed Council members at two separate videoconferences on the topic of detainees and missing persons, particularly women and children.⁵⁵⁸

In relation to the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, Council members heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator as well as by the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on the findings of the reports of the Secretary-General on the implementation of relevant resolutions, including resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) which authorized cross-border humanitarian operations.⁵⁵⁹ The briefers provided regular

⁵⁵⁴ See [S/PV.8715](#).

⁵⁵⁵ See [S/PV.8738](#). Further to the meetings, the representatives of the Russian Federation and Turkey transmitted the Additional Protocol to the Memorandum on the Stabilization of the Situation in the Idlib De-Escalation Area between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey, signed on 5 March 2020, deciding to cease all military actions in the Idlib De-Escalation Area ([S/2020/187](#)).

⁵⁵⁶ See [S/2020/353](#).

⁵⁵⁷ See [S/2020/353](#); [S/2020/420](#); [S/2020/551](#), ; [S/2020/823](#); [S/2020/936](#); and [S/2020/1049](#).

⁵⁵⁸ Ms. Noura Ghazi, human rights lawyer and activist briefed on 16 June 2020 ([S/2020/551](#)) and Ms. Wafa Mustafa, representative of Families for Freedom on 23 July 2020 ([S/2020/743](#)).

⁵⁵⁹ Resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#), para. 2.

updates on the humanitarian conditions in different parts of the country, particularly Idlib in northwestern Syria and the Rukban and Al-Hol refugee camps, and on the efforts of the cross-border humanitarian assistance, as well as the COVID-19 preparedness and response measures across Syria. In connection with the humanitarian situation in Syria, Council members were also briefed once by the Executive Director of UNICEF,⁵⁶⁰ and by two civil society representatives in two separate videoconferences.⁵⁶¹

With respect to the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, Council members were regularly briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs and her Deputy on the progress in the implementation of resolution [2118 \(2013\)](#) on the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons program. Starting in September 2020, the Council was briefed by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs in open videoconferences and public meetings⁵⁶² while prior in the year these briefings took place in informal consultations of the whole, closed videoconferences as well as an informal interactive dialogue in May 2020.⁵⁶³ In her briefings, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs reported on the activities of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, including on the investigations into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Aleppo in 2018, and in Saraqib in 2016, as well as on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of OPCW. At its 8764th meeting, held on 5 October 2020, prior to the briefing by the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Council members disagreed on whether to invite the former Director-General of OPCW, Mr. José Bustani, in accordance with rule 39 of the provisional rules of procedure. Further to these exchanges, the Council held a procedural vote, resulting in the rejection of the proposal to invite Mr. Bustani.⁵⁶⁴ In the monthly briefing for December 2020, Council members heard the briefing from the Director-General of OPCW, who reported on the progress of the Syrian chemical weapons

⁵⁶⁰ See [S/PV.8734](#).

⁵⁶¹ The Director of Policy and Senior Adviser at Physicians for Human Rights briefed on 29 June 2020 ([S/2020/635](#)) and the Regional Director of Syria Relief and Development briefed on 29 July 2020 ([S/2020/758](#)).

⁵⁶² See [S/2020/902](#), [S/PV.8764](#), [S/2020/1088](#), and [S/2020/1202](#).

⁵⁶³ See [S/2020/258](#), [S/2020/1142](#), [S/2020/344](#), [S/2020/558](#), [S/2020/1102](#), [S/2020/789](#), [S/2021/9](#), and [S/2020/1045](#). For the practice in 2019, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2019*, part I, sect. 22.

⁵⁶⁴ See [S/PV.8764](#). The result of the vote on the procedural motion on the question of whether the Council agreed to invite Mr. José Bustani to brief was as follows: *in favour*: China, Russian Federation, South Africa; *against*: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom, United States; and *abstaining*: Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Viet Nam. For more details, see part II, sect. VIII.

dossier following the issuance of the first Investigation and Identification Team report in April 2020.⁵⁶⁵

In 2020, the Council continued to focus in its meetings on three distinct areas in relation to the conflict in Yemen, namely, the political process to find a solution to the conflict, the humanitarian situation in the country, and the sanctions measures in place against individuals and entities designated as engaging in or providing support for acts that threatened the peace, security and stability in Yemen.

Regarding the political process, the Council heard regular briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen on the progress in the implementation of the Stockholm Agreement. During his briefings, both in meetings and videoconferences, he updated the Council on the status of the Hodeidah Agreement, including the outcomes of consultations between the parties. He also addressed the evolution of the hostilities in the country as well as the United Nations-brokered negotiations between the Government of Yemen and Ansar Allah to reach agreement on a joint declaration that would include a nationwide ceasefire, economic and humanitarian measures and the resumption of the political process aimed at comprehensively resolving and ending the conflict. The Special Representative made reference to gender inclusion as a high priority in the context of the joint declaration.⁵⁶⁶ In his briefings, the Special Envoy also reported on the progress made in prisoner and detainee exchanges, and the operation of medical air bridge facilitated by the World Health Organization to transport patients from Sana'a for medical assistance abroad. The Special Envoy continued to sound the alarm on the lack of progress in addressing the threat posed by the *FSO SAFER* oil tanker, which was threatening to cause an environmental and economic catastrophe for Yemen and the neighbouring countries and emphasized that the threat had to be dealt with on a purely technical basis, without politicization.⁵⁶⁷ On 15 October 2020, the Special Envoy reported that over 1,000 prisoners were being released as agreed upon during the September 2020 talks in Switzerland, which was the largest such operation in the history of the conflict in Yemen.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁵ See [S/2020/1202](#).

⁵⁶⁶ See [S/PV.8753](#).

⁵⁶⁷ See [S/PV.8725](#), [S/PV.8753](#) and [S/PV.8757](#).

⁵⁶⁸ See [S/PV.8770](#).

Regarding the humanitarian situation in Yemen, the Council heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, his Deputy and the Director of the Coordination and Response Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, often in conjunction with the Special Envoy. The briefers reported on the dire humanitarian situation in the country, exacerbated by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the continued economic instability. The briefers also focused on public health concerns, the displacement resulting from the escalation of the conflict in various parts of the country and the disproportionate impact of the war on children and women.⁵⁶⁹ In this regard, the Council also heard briefings from the General Coordinator in Yemen of Médecins du Monde and Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation, who focused on the grave human rights violations against children in Yemen, including their widespread recruitment and maiming.⁵⁷⁰ On 15 July 2020, the Council also heard a briefing by the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on the serious implications of the oil leakage of the *FSO SAFER*. She reported that UNEP had been working to develop a response plan with the International Maritime Organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services, the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and PERSGA (Mutual Aid Centre of the Regional Organization for the Conservation of the Environment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden). She said that it was imperative that access be granted to the *FSO SAFER* to assess and inspect the current state of the vessel to safely evacuate the oil and prevent environmental and human catastrophe.⁵⁷¹ Against a backdrop of growing concerns over the risk of widespread famine in Yemen, on 11 November 2020, the Council also heard briefings from the Executive Director of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Founder and Executive Director of Solutions for Sustainable Society. During the briefing, the Executive Director of WFP called on the major donors to step

⁵⁶⁹ See [S/PV.8704](#); [S/PV.8725](#); [S/PV.8745](#); [S/PV.8753](#); [S/PV.8757](#); [S/PV.8770](#); [S/2020/313](#); [S/2020/411](#); [S/2020/721](#); and [S/2020/1109](#).

⁵⁷⁰ See [S/PV.8753](#).

⁵⁷¹ See [S/2020/721](#).

up with additional funds and urged the Council to seize the opportunity to avoid the looming famine in Yemen.⁵⁷²

Regarding the sanctions in Yemen, on 18 February 2020, the Council held a meeting at which the representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, in her capacity as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#), briefed the Council on the body's activities since 16 May 2019.⁵⁷³ She reported that the Committee had received two implementation reports, from Panama and Portugal, and continued to receive vessel inspection reports from the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism for Yemen. She also noted that the Committee had agreed to call on all parties to the conflict in Yemen to strictly adhere to international humanitarian law and to investigate and prosecute members who had committed international humanitarian law violations, pursuant to the recommendation contained in the final report of the Panel of Experts under resolution [2456 \(2019\)](#).⁵⁷⁴

In its decisions in 2020, the Council also addressed the issues outlined above concerning the conflicts in the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen as well as the mandates of UNDOF and UNIFIL.

In connection with the Syrian Arab Republic and against the backdrop of the expiration of the authorization for the cross-border operations mechanism which had been last renewed in December 2018 by resolution [2449 \(2018\)](#),⁵⁷⁵ the Council held a meeting on 10 January 2020, to consider two competing draft resolutions to extend the mechanism. The two drafts were submitted by Belgium and Germany,⁵⁷⁶ and by the Russian Federation,⁵⁷⁷ respectively.⁵⁷⁸ At the outset of the meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation proposed an oral amendment to paragraph 6 of the draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany.⁵⁷⁹ Taking the floor before the vote on the oral amendment, the representative of Belgium stated that the amendment proposed by the Russian Federation was not acceptable because it contradicted the very system

⁵⁷² See [S/2020/1109](#).

⁵⁷³ See [S/PV.8725](#).

⁵⁷⁴ [S/2020/326](#). See also [S/2020/70](#) and [S/2020/70/Corr.1](#)

⁵⁷⁵ Resolution [2449 \(2018\)](#), para. 3.

⁵⁷⁶ [S/2020/24](#).

⁵⁷⁷ Since the draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation was withdrawn there is no record available.

⁵⁷⁸ See [S/PV.8700](#).

⁵⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

of the cross-border mechanism that needed to be preserved and asked the Council to approve the draft resolution as presented by the co-penholders and to vote in favour of it. The oral amendment failed to garner the sufficient number of votes and the Council subsequently voted and adopted the draft resolution as originally proposed, as resolution [2504 \(2020\)](#).⁵⁸⁰ By resolution [2504 \(2020\)](#), the Council extended the authorization of humanitarian agencies to use two out of the four border crossings authorized in resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#) to deliver humanitarian assistance for a period of six months, until 10 July 2020, excluding the border crossings of Al-Ramtha and of Al Yarubiyah.⁵⁸¹ The representative of China, noting his active engagement in the negotiations process, said that given the current situation, extending the mandate for two crossing points for six months was realistic and feasible as they were the most important and served the humanitarian needs of Syria.⁵⁸² The representative of the Russian Federation explained that it abstained for the sole purpose of not blocking cross-border assistance to the Syrian province of Idlib, which was the only one that still really needed that method of delivering supplies. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that the Council should be prepared to take action, including restoring cross-border access in the north-east, if the Secretary-General's review concluded that alternative humanitarian access routes were inadequate to meet the humanitarian need of the population. The representative of the United States explained its abstention by saying that the text of resolution [2504 \(2020\)](#) was the only path forward that would reasonably allow for the delivery of any aid at all to the Syrian people. She also emphasized that the resolution was “watered down” and inadequate to the needs of the Syrian people due to the unwillingness of the Russian Federation to maintain the then current levels of aid flows. At the end of the meeting, the representative of the Russian Federation announced that in light of the adoption of resolution [2504 \(2020\)](#), the Russian Federation would withdraw the draft resolution contained in document [S/2020/24](#).

⁵⁸⁰ The result on the vote on the oral amendment to the draft resolution ([S/2020/24](#)) was as follows: *in favour*: China, Russian Federation, Viet Nam; *against*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States; *abstaining*: Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa and Tunisia.

⁵⁸¹ Resolution [2504 \(2020\)](#), para. 3.

⁵⁸² [S/PV.8700](#).

With the expiration of the authorization for the cross-border operations mechanism again in July 2020, the Council voted on five competing draft resolutions between 7 July 2020 and 11 July 2020. In the first round of consideration of the competing drafts,⁵⁸³ the Council failed first to adopt a draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany, due to the negative vote of two permanent members, the Russian Federation and China.⁵⁸⁴ In addition, the Council also failed to adopt a draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation because it did not receive the required number of votes.⁵⁸⁵ On 10 July 2020, in two separate votes following the written procedure, the Council failed again to adopt any of the two draft resolutions presented. The draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany was not adopted due to the negative vote of two permanent members, the Russian Federation and China.⁵⁸⁶ The draft resolution submitted by the Russian Federation was also not adopted owing to an insufficient number of votes.⁵⁸⁷ On 11 July 2020, further to a vote on three possible amendments, two submitted by the Russian Federation and one by China,⁵⁸⁸ the Council voted on a fifth draft resolution, submitted by Belgium and Germany,⁵⁸⁹ which was adopted as resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#).⁵⁹⁰ By resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#) the Council decided to renew the cross-border humanitarian mechanism established in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Security Council resolutions [2165 \(2014\)](#), for a period of 12 months, until 10 July 2021, excluding the border crossings of Al-Ramtha, Al Yarubiyah and Bab al-Salam, three of the four border crossings authorized in resolution [2165 \(2014\)](#).⁵⁹¹ In the explanation of vote submitted to

⁵⁸³ The vote followed the procedure provided for in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council ([S/2020/253](#)). For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁵⁸⁴ See [S/2020/654](#). See also [S/2020/657](#) and [S/2020/661](#).

⁵⁸⁵ See [S/2020/658](#). See also [S/2020/664](#) and [S/2020/671](#).

⁵⁸⁶ See [S/2020/667](#). See also [S/2020/681](#) and [S/2020/693](#).

⁵⁸⁷ See [S/2020/683](#). See also [S/2020/688](#) and [S/2020/694](#).

⁵⁸⁸ The three amendments were submitted by the Russian Federation ([S/2020/690](#) and [S/2020/691](#)) and China ([S/2020/692](#)), respectively. Having failed to obtain the required number of votes, these amendments were not adopted, see [S/2020/695](#), [S/2020/696](#), and [S/2020/697](#).

⁵⁸⁹ [S/2020/684](#).

⁵⁹⁰ The result on the vote on the draft resolution ([S/2020/684](#)) was as follows: *in favour*: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; *against*: none; *abstaining*: China, Dominican Republic and Russian Federation). See [S/2020/698](#).

⁵⁹¹ Resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#), para. 2.

the Council,⁵⁹² the representative of Belgium submitted that, after many rounds of discussion and votes and given the divergent positions among the members of the Council, the Security Council had no choice but to make yet another decision that did not reflect the humanitarian needs on the ground, in order to find compromise. He added that in the interest of the almost three million civilians who depended on the Bab Al-Hawa border crossing, the Council had to make the decision to compromise, allowing for Bab Al-Hawa to stay open for 12 months, which would allow for better planning and greater predictability for the many non-governmental organizations that guaranteed the survival of the people suffering in and around Idlib.⁵⁹³ Addressing his country's abstention, the representative of China said that the cross-border mechanism should be adjusted in the light of the developments on the ground, and noted that resolution [2533 \(2020\)](#), presented by Belgium and Germany, reaffirmed the commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Syria and included further adjustment to the cross-border mechanism.⁵⁹⁴ Explaining his country's abstention, the representative of the Dominican Republic stated that although the Council had renewed the mechanism, the failure to reopen the border crossing of Al-Yarubiyah and the decision to close the Bab Al-Salam crossing would have terrible consequences and that the flagrant politicization of the decision was not one of which the Council should be proud. He expressed hope that the Council would be able to overcome the many differences, divisions and fears that prevented it from taking principled, people-centred humanitarian decisions.⁵⁹⁵ The representative of the Russian Federation, explaining his abstention, stated that the vote reflected Russia's principled position on the cross-border mechanism, and that the cross-border mechanism in Syria did not reflect the minimal requirements of international humanitarian law as it was impossible to monitor how humanitarian assistance was delivered, and who were its final beneficiaries on the ground. He added that the co-penholders of the resolution had ignored his country's principled concerns which forced his country to block the German-Belgium draft resolution twice and present

⁵⁹² For more information on procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁵⁹³ See [S/2020/702](#).

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid.

alternative texts, and reminded the authors of the resolution, as well as the penholders of other dossiers in the Council, that the “so-called penholdership” was not a privilege but rather a special responsibility vis-a-vis other members of the Council, as well as the whole international community.⁵⁹⁶

With regard to the conflict in Yemen, the Council adopted resolutions [2505 \(2020\)](#) of 13 January 2020 and [2534 \(2020\)](#) of 14 July 2020 concerning the United Nations Mission to support the Hodeidah Agreement (UNMHA). The Council extended the mandate of the Mission twice, for a period of six months by resolution [2505 \(2020\)](#) until 15 July 2020,⁵⁹⁷ and one year by resolution [2534 \(2020\)](#) until 15 July 2021.⁵⁹⁸ By both resolutions, the Council reiterated the existing mandate of the Mission, which included leading and supporting the functioning of the Redeployment Coordination Committee to oversee the governorate-wide ceasefire, redeployment of forces, and mine action operations; monitoring the compliance of the parties to the ceasefire and the mutual redeployment of forces from the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa; working with the parties so that the security of the city of Hodeidah and the ports of Hodeidah, Salif and Ras Issa was assured by local security forces in accordance with Yemeni law; and facilitating and coordinating United Nations support to assist the parties to fully implement the Hodeidah Agreement.⁵⁹⁹ Taking into account the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council also requested the Secretary-General to fully deploy UNMHA expeditiously, and called on the parties to the Hodeidah Agreement to support the United Nations by ensuring the safety, security, and health of UNMHA personnel, and the unhindered and expeditious movement into and within Yemen of UNMHA personnel and equipment, provisions and essential supplies.⁶⁰⁰ In addition, by both resolution [2505 \(2020\)](#) and resolution [2534 \(2020\)](#), the Council reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to report on a monthly basis on progress regarding the implementation of the resolutions, and further requested the

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Resolution [2505 \(2020\)](#), para. 1.

⁵⁹⁸ Resolution [2534 \(2020\)](#), para. 1.

⁵⁹⁹ Resolution [2505 \(2020\)](#) and resolution [2534 \(2020\)](#), para. 2(a)-(d). For more information on the mandate of UNMHA, see part X, sect. II.

⁶⁰⁰ Resolution [2534 \(2020\)](#), para. 5.

Secretary-General to present to the Council a further review of UNMHA at least one month before the expiration of the Mission's mandate.⁶⁰¹

Regarding the sanctions measures imposed in connection with the conflict in Yemen, on 25 February 2020, the Council adopted resolution [2511 \(2020\)](#) under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the abstention of China and the Russian Federation. By resolution [2511 \(2020\)](#), the Council renewed the sanctions measures in place until 26 February 2021, and extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts for 13 months, until 28 March 2021.⁶⁰² Explaining his abstention, the representative of the Russian Federation said that he was not in a position to support resolution [2511 \(2020\)](#), penned by the United Kingdom, as not all of the concerns expressed during the consultations were taken into account. Emphasizing that there was no unity during the discussions of the report of the Panel of Experts, the representative of the Russian Federation noted that many delegations did not have an opportunity to participate on equal footing in efforts to achieve a balanced text and what transpired during the voting attested to the non-constructive working methods of the sponsors of the draft.⁶⁰³ The representative of China explained his decision to abstain in the voting, stating that the resolution failed to address his country's concerns, including the broad mandates of the Panel of Experts and the unnecessary amendments to the designation criteria. He added that the recruitment of child soldiers and sexual violence in conflict were already included in the existing resolution under the criteria of violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and the separate listing of these two acts had not been fully discussed by the Committee and was not in accordance with its practice.⁶⁰⁴

In 2020, the mandate of UNDOF was renewed twice by resolutions [2530 \(2020\)](#) and [2555 \(2020\)](#) for periods of six months each, until 31 December 2020 and 30 June 2021, respectively.⁶⁰⁵ By resolution [2530 \(2020\)](#), the Council requested UNDOF to take all appropriate

⁶⁰¹ Resolution [2505 \(2020\)](#) and resolution [2534 \(2020\)](#), paras 7 and 8.

⁶⁰² Resolution [2511 \(2020\)](#), paras. 2 and 7. For more information on the sanctions measures, see part VII, sect. III and for more information on the Committee and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.

⁶⁰³ See [S/PV.8732](#).

⁶⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁵ Resolutions [2530 \(2020\)](#), para.15; and [2555 \(2020\)](#), para 15. For more information on the mandate of UNDOF, see part X, sect. I.

steps to protect the safety, security and health of all UNDOF personnel, in line with resolution [2518 \(2020\)](#), taking into account the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.⁶⁰⁶ By resolution [2555 \(2020\)](#), the Council requested the Secretary-General and troop- and police-contributing countries to seek to increase the number of women in UNDOF, as well as to ensure the full, equal, and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women at all levels, and in all positions, including senior leadership positions, and to implement other relevant provisions of resolution [2538 \(2020\)](#).⁶⁰⁷

In connection with Lebanon, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#), extending the mandate of UNIFIL for one year until 31 August 2021.⁶⁰⁸ Against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic, the Council commended UNIFIL for the preventive measures taken to fight the pandemic, and recalled resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#) and its request to the Secretary-General to instruct peacekeeping operations to provide support to host country authorities in their efforts to contain the pandemic and take all appropriate steps to protect the safety, security and health of all UN personnel in UN peace operations.⁶⁰⁹ Furthermore, in the aftermath of the Beirut explosions on 4 August 2020, the Council expressed its solidarity with Lebanon and its people, and welcomed the International Conference on Assistance and Support to Lebanon and Beirut organized on 9 August 2020 by France and the United Nations, further calling on the international community to reinforce its support.⁶¹⁰ Recognizing that UNIFIL had successfully implemented its mandate since 2006 and allowed for maintaining peace and security, the Council decided to authorize the reduction of the troop-ceiling set out in paragraph 11 of resolution [1701 \(2006\)](#) from 15,000 to 13,000 authorized troops.⁶¹¹

For the purposes of facilitating the coverage of this item, information on meetings and videoconferences is set out below under six separate tables and under four separate headings,

⁶⁰⁶ Resolution [2530 \(2020\)](#), para. 8.

⁶⁰⁷ Resolution [2555 \(2020\)](#), para. 13.

⁶⁰⁸ Resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#), para. 1. See also part I, sect. 22. For more information on the mandate of UNIFIL, see part X, sect. I.

⁶⁰⁹ Resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#), fifth preambular paragraph. See also resolution [2532 \(2020\)](#).

⁶¹⁰ *Ibid.*, second preambular paragraph. See also [S/2020/1045](#).

⁶¹¹ Resolution [2539 \(2020\)](#), para. 29.

namely: (a) Syrian Arab Republic, (b) Yemen, (c) United Nations Disengagement Observer Force, and (d) United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

Table 1

Meetings: The situation in the Middle East – Syrian Arab Republic

<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.8700 10 January 2020		Draft resolution submitted by Belgium and Germany S/2020/24	Syrian Arab Republic		13 Council members ^a invitee	Resolution 2504 (2020) 11-0-4 ^b
S/PV.8707 29 January 2020			Syrian Arab Republic	Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	14 Council members ^c , all invitees	
S/PV.8708 29 January 2020			Syrian Arab Republic	Deputy Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8715 6 February 2020			Iran (Islamic Republic of), Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	14 Council members ^d , all invitees ^e	
S/PV.8727 19 February 2020			Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees ^f	

<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.8734 27 February 2020	Report of the Secretary-General on the review of alternative modalities for the border crossing of Ya'rubiyah (S/2020/139) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) , 2165 (2014) , 2191 (2014) , 2258 (2015) , 2332 (2016) , 2393 (2017) , 2401(2018) , 2449 (2018) and 2504 (2020) (S/2020/141)		Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, Executive Director of United Nations Children's Fund	All Council members ^g , all invitees	
S/PV.8738 28 February 2020			Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs	Secretary-General, 14 Council members ^h , all invitees	

^a The representatives of Niger and South Africa did not make a statement.

^b *For:* Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia and Viet Nam; *against:* none; *abstaining:* China, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

^c The representative of Germany did not make a statement. The representative of Belgium spoke on behalf of the co-penholders on the humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic: Belgium and Germany.

^d The representative of Niger did not make a statement.

^e The Special Envoy and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.

^f The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.

^g Belgium was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Development and Germany was represented by its Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs.

^h The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines did not make a statement.

Table 2

Videoconferences: The situation in the Middle East – Syrian Arab Republic

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
30 March 2020 ^a	S/2020/254	Letter dated 31 March 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 April 2020	S/2020/353	Letter dated 1 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 April 2020	S/2020/354	Letter dated 1 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	
18 May 2020	S/2020/420	Letter dated 20 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	
19 May 2020	S/2020/427	Letter dated 21 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	
16 June 2020	S/2020/551	Letter dated 18 June 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 June 2020	S/2020/635	Letter dated 1 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
7 July 2020	S/2020/657	Letter dated 7 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	13-2-0 ^b S/2020/661 (Record of written procedure)

<i>Videokonference date</i>	<i>Videokonference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
8 July 2020	S/2020/664	Letter dated 8 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	4-7-4 ^c S/2020/671 (Record of written procedure)
10 July 2020	S/2020/681	Letter dated 10 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	13-2-0 ^d S/2020/693 (Record of written procedure)
10 July 2020	S/2020/688	Letter dated 10 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	4-7-4 ^e S/2020/694 (Record of written procedure)
11 July 2020	S/2020/702	Letter dated 12 July 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 2533 (2020) 13-0-2 ^f S/2020/698 (Record of written procedure)
23 July 2020	S/2020/743	Letter dated 27 July 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 July 2020	S/2020/758	Letter dated 4 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	
19 August 2020	S/2020/823	Letter dated 21 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	
27 August 2020	S/2020/866	Letter dated 31 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	

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
10 September 2020	S/2020/902	Letter dated 14 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 September 2020	S/2020/915	Letter dated 18 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
18 September 2020	S/2020/936	Letter dated 22 September 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
27 October 2020	S/2020/1049	Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
5 November 2020	S/2020/1088	Letter dated 9 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	
25 November 2020	S/2020/1147	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	
11 December 2020	S/2020/1202	Letter dated 16 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
16 December 2020	S/2020/1257	Letter dated 23 December 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

^a Due to technical difficulties, instead of open, the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

^b *For:* Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *against:* China and Russian Federation. *abstaining:* None.

^c For: China, Russian Federation, South Africa and Viet Nam. *Against*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. *Abstaining*: Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.

^d For: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *Against*: China and Russian Federation. *Abstaining*: None.

^e For: China, Russian Federation, South Africa and Viet Nam. *Against*: Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, United Kingdom and United States. *Abstaining*: Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia.

^f For: Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. *Against*: None. *Abstaining*: China, Dominican Republic and Russian Federation.

Table 3

Meetings: The situation in the Middle East – Yemen

<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.8701 13 January 2020	Letter dated 14 October 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/823)	Draft resolution submitted by United Kingdom (S/2020/27)				Resolution 2505 (2020) 15-0-0
S/PV.8704 16 January 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Yemen, Director of the Coordination Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	All Council members, all invitees ^a	
S/PV.8725 18 February 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, ^b all invitees ^c	
S/PV.8732 25 February 2020	Letter dated 27 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on Yemen addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/70)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/146)	Yemen		Eight Council members ^d , invitee	Resolution 2511 (2020) 15-0-2 ^e (adopted under Chapter VII)
S/PV.8745 12 March 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Acting Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees ^f	

Meeting record and date	Sub-item	Other documents	Rule 37 invitations	Rule 39 and other invitations	Speakers	Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)
S/PV.8747 14 July 2020	Letter dated 15 June 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2020/524)	Draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom (S/2020/679)				Resolution 2534 (2020) 15-0-0
S.PV.8753 28 July 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, General Coordinator in Yemen of Médecins du Monde, Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation	All Council members, all invitees ^g	
S/PV.8757 15 September 2020			Yemen	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8770 15 October 2020				Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	All Council members, all invitees	

^a The Director of the Coordination Division of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.

^b The representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines spoke in his national capacity and in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2140 \(2014\)](#).

^c The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.

^d Belgium, China, France, Indonesia, Niger, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

^e *For:* Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam; *against:* none; *abstaining:* China, Russian Federation.

^f The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Amman.

^g The Special Envoy participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva and the Under-Secretary-General participated in the meeting via videoconference from New York. The General Coordinator in Yemen of Médecins du Monde and the Chairwoman of the Arab Human Rights Foundation participated in the meeting via videoconference from Sana'a.

Table 4

Videconferences: The situation in the Middle East – Yemen

<i>Videokonferenz date</i>	<i>Videokonferenz record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
16 April 2020	S/2020/313	Letter dated 21 April 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
14 May 2020	S/2020/411	Letter dated 18 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	
15 July 2020	S/2020/721	Letter dated 17 July 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 November 2020	S/2020/1109	Letter dated 13 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	

Table 5

Videokonferenzen: Die Situation im Nahen Osten – United Nations Disengagement Observer Force

<i>Videokonferenz date</i>	<i>Videokonferenz record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
29 June 2020	S/2020/612	Letter dated 29 June 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 2530 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/624 (Record of written procedure)
18 December 2020	S/2020/1252	Letter dated 18 December 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 2555 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/1263 (Record of written procedure)

Table 6

Videoconferences: The situation in the Middle East – United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
28 August 2020	S/2020/853	Letter dated 29 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	Resolution 2539 (2020) 15-0-0 S/2020/857 (Record of written procedure)
