33. Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting under the item entitled “Peacebuilding and sustaining peace” which took the form of an open debate. More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers is given in table 1 below. Council members also held three open videoconferences in connection with this item and the Council adopted one resolution. More information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below. In addition to meetings and videoconferences, in 2020, Council members also held an informal interactive dialogue on 22 July in connection with this item.

In 2020, Council members were briefed by a variety of speakers, including the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the former Secretary-General, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, the President of the Economic and Social Council and representatives from other international and regional organizations such as the African Union Development Agency and speakers from civil society and non-governmental organizations.

On 13 February 2020, at the initiative of Belgium, which held the Presidency for the month, the Council convened a high-level open debate under the sub-item entitled “Transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations”. The High Commissioner for Human Rights stated that lasting peace was interlinked with justice, development and respect for human rights. Her experience in Chile had convinced her that transitional justice processes that were context-specific, nationally owned and focused on victims could connect, empower and transform societies, thereby contributing to lasting and just peace. She emphasized truth-seeking initiatives as they enabled victims to recount their experiences and opened new spaces where victims and perpetrators could re-establish a connection, adding that such processes were often deeply empowering for victims. The High Commissioner further noted that criminal

888 For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.
889 Resolution 2558 (2020). For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
890 See A/75/2, part II, chap. 28. See also, S/2021/9.
891 A concept note was circulated by letter dated 4 February 2020 (S/2020/98).
accountability was vital but should be accompanied by a broad range of complementary measures to support truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.\textsuperscript{892} Following the briefing by the High Commissioner, the President of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition of Colombia stated that transitional justice was the most comprehensive, dynamic and promising peacebuilding instrument at the disposal of victims around the world and of peoples who had endured gross human rights violations during situations of internal armed conflict. His briefing focused on five main points: victims, truth in transitional justice, non-repetition, comprehensive transition and the role of the Security Council and of the international community. With regard to the latter, he said that the Council and the international community had to play a vital role in ensuring transitional justice. Peace was the responsibility of a nation’s citizens, but the cases that called for transitional justice involved extreme ruptures in the human experience. Ensuring transitional justice was therefore incumbent on the world community, as these were dynamically and externally interrelated conflicts that no country could manage alone.\textsuperscript{893} The Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa, Trustee of the Desmond Tutu Peace Centre and Chair of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan stated that it was important to ensure that peace and justice were seen as mutually reinforcing imperatives and not replaced by the erroneous notion that peace must come first, before accountability. She called upon the Council to address impunity using a prevention lens to ensure the non-recurrence of violations, as well as to address the indirect causes of conflict that exacerbated conflict, namely, structural violence, discrimination, economic exploitation, unequal power relations and climate justice.

During the discussion, several Council members shared the experience of their respective countries’ national reconciliation processes.\textsuperscript{894} Several Council members called for inclusive transitional justice and highlighted the importance of the role of women in reconciliation processes.\textsuperscript{895} During the debate, some speakers emphasized the importance of accountability for

\textsuperscript{892} S/PV.8723.
\textsuperscript{893} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{894} Ibid., Niger, Estonia, South Africa, Tunisia and Germany.
\textsuperscript{895} Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, South Africa, United States, Indonesia, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominican Republic and Viet Nam.
reconciliation processes and stressed the need to combat impunity.\textsuperscript{896} Some argued that the International Criminal Court could help to bring justice or to support victims of gross violations.\textsuperscript{897} Several Council members rejected one-size-fits-all strategies or generic approaches and argued that transitional justice processes should take into consideration national and local contexts.\textsuperscript{898} Council members stated that the Council should play a greater role in promoting and supporting transitional justice processes.\textsuperscript{899}

On 12 August 2020, at the initiative of Indonesia, which held the Presidency for the month,\textsuperscript{900} Council members held an open videoconference in connection with this item and under the sub-item entitled “Pandemics and the challenges of sustaining peace”. Council members were briefed by the Secretary-General, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Director of the New York University Center on International Cooperation.\textsuperscript{901}

The Secretary-General stated that the COVID-19 pandemic threatened hard-won development and peacebuilding gains and risked exacerbating conflicts or fomenting new ones. He identified three key dangers, namely, the erosion of public trust, the destabilization of the global economic order, and the weakening of the social fabric. Nevertheless, he argued that the pandemic also created opportunities for peace, noting that the appeal for a global ceasefire had prompted positive responses from Governments and non-State actors and that the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) had been a step in the right direction. He further called upon the Council to use its influence for an investment in prevention. In that regard, he stated that the responses to the pandemic had to be conflict-sensitive and inclusive. In addition, he argued that sustaining peace required an integrated and coherent approach through strong collaboration among humanitarian, development and peace actors. In that regard, he noted that the Council and the

\textsuperscript{896} Ibid., Belgium, Niger, Estonia, Tunisia, United Kingdom, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Germany.

\textsuperscript{897} Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, Tunisia, Germany and France.

\textsuperscript{898} Ibid., Belgium, South Africa, United States, Indonesia, Tunisia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, France, China, Viet Nam and Russian Federation.

\textsuperscript{899} Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, South Africa, Indonesia, Tunisia, Germany and Dominican Republic. For further details on the discussion, see part VI, sect. IV.

\textsuperscript{900} A concept note was circulated by letter dated 30 July 2020 (S/2020/765).

\textsuperscript{901} See S/2020/799. Viet Nam was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs; Estonia and Indonesia were represented by their respective Ministers of Foreign Affairs; South Africa was represented by its Minister for International Relations and Cooperation; and Germany was represented by its Minister of State of the German Federal Foreign Office.
Peacebuilding Commission could help marshal a collaborative response to the peacebuilding impact of the pandemic, drawing on lessons from previous health crises, such as the Ebola virus disease outbreak. The Secretary-General added that the approach to the peacebuilding needs in the context of the pandemic had to be flexible and tailored, citing examples from the Peacebuilding Fund. 902 In his statement, the former Secretary-General welcomed the adoption of resolution 2532 (2020) calling for a humanitarian ceasefire, but expressed regret that valuable months had been wasted in arguments over the details of the text. That, he said, had weakened the message that the Council needed to send to all warring parties, namely, that it was the time to confront a common enemy. He noted that the impact of the pandemic on conflict-affected settings had been much worse than initially thought, both in terms of the immediate health and humanitarian ramifications, but also in the areas of social cohesion, governance and the rule of law. He stressed that global solidarity had been loosened, while multilateralism had been under threat. Noting that the economic impacts of the pandemic would be both long-lasting and severe, he cited warnings of famines by the World Food Programme and the loss of education opportunities. With reference to the joint resolutions on peacebuilding adopted by the Council and the General Assembly (resolution 2282 (2016) and General Assembly resolution 70/262), and the Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the former Secretary-General stressed that they had offered an opportunity to the United Nations to focus on preventing conflicts so that the systemic causes of conflicts, rather than just the symptoms, were holistically addressed, and the lessons learned could also be applied to the response to COVID-19. He said that the experience of the crisis had to also spur to change the priorities and the understandings of what threats and values really mattered, addressing the inequalities in societies and the gaps in social protection. Furthermore, the pandemic had demonstrated the genuine utility of sustaining peace and proved the benefits of enhancing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and served as an opportunity to promote greater discussions and activities on emerging threats. It had also shown that the United Nations needed to work more effectively with various partners, including regional organizations, international financial institutions, the private sector and civil society. In this regard, he added that the Peacebuilding Commission was well positioned to help

902 Ibid.

Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security
synergize multi-stakeholder partnerships by making full use of its distinctive convening power. The Director of the New York University Center on International Cooperation stated that the pandemic had exposed fragility in all countries, in health systems and economic, social and political fabric. She identified five major drivers of conflict, namely, the economic shock and rising inequality, the practical problems in convening peace processes and elections, growing food insecurity, a decrease in remittances and issues concerning trade and migration, and inequal access to public-health goods. Nevertheless, she argued that positive opportunities for peacebuilding existed, such as the unprecedented demand for more international collective action, the call for ceasefires issued by the Secretary-General and supported in resolution 2532 (2020), the opportunity to use a sustaining peace lens from early on in the response to the pandemic and the investment in universal health and equal access to vaccines. She added that these problems could become international threats to peace and security if not addressed by the Council, arguing that they formed an example of an extreme public health and economic shock that deserved to qualify as peacebuilding risk.

Council members warned that the pandemic threatened to reverse or delay hard-won peacebuilding gains in conflict-affected areas. Some speakers stressed the importance of international cooperation and multilateralism in the fight against the pandemic. Council members welcomed and reaffirmed the Secretary-General’s appeal for an immediate global ceasefire and facilitation of humanitarian activities during the period of crisis. Furthermore, some participants called for the lifting of sanctions, arguing that they could undermine countries’ ability to address the pandemic. Some speakers emphasized the inclusion of both women and youth in the response to the pandemic and in peacebuilding processes in general. Several Council members highlighted the importance of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) during

904 Ibid., pp. 8-9.
905 Ibid., Indonesia, Viet Nam, South Africa, Germany, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and the United Kingdom. For further details on the discussion, see part VII, sect. I.
906 See S/2020/799, Viet Nam, South Africa, Germany, Belgium, China, France and Tunisia.
907 Ibid., Viet Nam, South Africa, China and Niger.
908 Ibid., Viet Nam, South Africa, China, Russian Federation and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
909 Ibid., Estonia, Germany, Dominican Republic, France, Niger and Tunisia.
the pandemic, some of which called for a greater advisory role for the PBC vis-à-vis the Council.

On 3 November 2020, at the initiative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, which held the Presidency for the month, Council members held an open videoconference in connection with this item and on the theme “Contemporary drivers of conflict and insecurity”. Council members heard briefings by the Deputy Secretary-General, the Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency, the Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies and the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, in his capacity as President of the Economic and Social Council.

The Deputy Secretary-General stated that the COVID-19 pandemic continued to exacerbate the risks and drivers of conflict, reversing development and peacebuilding gains and aggravating conflicts and undermining efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. She stated that the climate emergency was a major driver of inequality, insecurity and conflict. Noting that the drivers of conflict were not static, she stressed that building and sustaining peace required addressing the root causes as they developed and interacted with one another. She argued that the pandemic had highlighted the necessity of investing in inclusive, equitable governance and institutions, as well as tackling root causes, in order to address the drivers of all kinds of crises and shocks. The Chief Executive Officer of the African Union Development Agency drew attention to the critical situation in West Africa in general, and in the Sahel in particular. Given the high natural population growth, those States and their Governments’

910 Ibid., Estonia, South Africa, Germany, Belgium, China, Dominican Republic, France, Russian Federation and United Kingdom.
911 Ibid., Estonia, Germany and Dominican Republic.
912 A concept note was circulated by letter dated 30 October 2020 (S/2020/1064).
913 An analytical summary of the videoconference was circulated by letter dated 29 December 2020 (S/2020/1328).
914 See S/2020/1090. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was represented by its Prime Minister, Minister for the Public Service, National Security, Legal Affairs and Grenadines Affairs; Tunisia was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs; Belgium was represented by its Minister of Development Cooperation; Estonia was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; Germany was represented by its Minister of State of the German Federal Foreign Office; the Russian Federation was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs; South Africa was represented by its Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation; the United Kingdom was represented by its Minister of State for the Commonwealth, the United Nations and South Asia; and Viet Nam was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.
915 Ibid.

Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security

capacity to provide public services and administer their territory would remain glaringly inadequate. He emphasized the security crisis throughout the region that affected civilian populations, causing food insecurity and displacement of populations. Moreover, he said that structural obstacles to development and the challenging security situation were compounded by new risk factors exacerbating an already fragile situation, such as the warming in the Sahel and the increase in the frequency of extreme weather events. He suggested several measures to mitigate the socioeconomic fragility and financial poverty of States, and concluded by emphasizing the importance of data, their analysis and the consensus built around them as tools for the formulation of holistic, coherent and sustainable policies and methods of intervention.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of the West Indies highlighted the reparatory justice movement against the legacies of slavery, violent colonization and institutional racism. He called upon the United Nations to reconvene the 1960s Special Committee on Decolonization to settle the matter of reparations, noting that it was a necessary part of the Decade of Action adopted by the United Nations to alleviate the continuing suffering of people of African descent who had been the targeted victims of violent colonization. He also called upon the Council to acknowledge the reparations for the slavery movement and to “assist the world in moving on and beyond the historical site of these crimes”. The Permanent Representative of Pakistan and President of the Economic and Social Council referred to Articles 55 and 65 of the Charter and argued that the Charter’s framers had clearly conceived that the United Nations would both collectively maintain and enforce peace as well as create the conditions for peace and stability. He argued that the United Nations’ Member States had failed to live up to the ideals of collective and cooperative security and recalled in that regard the Secretary-General’s observation that “inequality was the hallmark of our times”. He stressed that the origins of many, if not most, of the conflicts and disputes on the agenda of the Council could be traced to this unequal world order and called for the implementation by the international community of several forms of debt suspension and restructuring, as well as reforms to address structural inequalities.916

---

916 For further information on the relations between the Council and the Economic and Social Council, see part IV, sect. II.

Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security


285
Several Council members stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed vulnerabilities and exacerbated root causes of conflict.\(^{917}\) Council members also highlighted climate change as a major driver of conflict.\(^{918}\) The representative of the Russian Federation stated, however, that climate change was not to be considered as a universal factor underlying conflict and global insecurity. Council members called for a whole-of-system approach to peacebuilding with an enhanced coordination among United Nations institutions and agencies.\(^{919}\) Some Council members underscored the importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organizations.\(^{920}\) Several Council members stressed that peace and development were linked and interdependent.\(^{921}\) Several participants acknowledged the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and called for the strengthening of its advisory role.\(^{922}\)

In 2020, the Council unanimously adopted one resolution in connection with this item. Following the report of the Secretary-General on peacebuilding and sustaining peace,\(^{923}\) the General Assembly and the Council concluded the 2020 comprehensive review process of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture through the adoption of identical resolutions, namely, resolution \(70/262\) and resolution \(2558\ (2020)\).\(^{924}\) By resolution 2558 (2020), the Council reaffirmed that development, peace and security, and human rights were interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Moreover, the Council expressed grave concern regarding the devastating impact of

\(^{917}\) See S/2020/1090, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, Germany, Russian Federation, South Africa, Viet Nam, China, Niger, Dominican Republic, Indonesia and France.

\(^{918}\) Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, Germany, South Africa, United Kingdom, China, Niger, Dominican Republic, Indonesia and France.

\(^{919}\) Ibid., Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Belgium, Russian Federation, South Africa, China, Indonesia and France.

\(^{920}\) Ibid., South Africa, Viet Nam, China, Niger and Indonesia.

\(^{921}\) Ibid., Belgium, Estonia, South Africa, United Kingdom, China, Niger, Indonesia and France.

\(^{922}\) Ibid., Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark (also on behalf of the Nordic countries), El Salvador, European Union, Georgia, Guatemala, Ireland, Japan, Malta, Namibia, Nigeria, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Switzerland and United Arab Emirates. For further information on the Peacebuilding Commission, see part IX, sect. VII.

\(^{923}\) See S/2020/773. In addition to the report of the Secretary-General, inputs for the 2020 review of the peacebuilding architecture were also provided by, among others, the Peacebuilding Commission through its letter dated 2 July 2020 (S/2020/645) and the group of Independent Eminent Persons through its letters dated 6 July 2020 (S/2020/678). The group of Independent Eminent Persons was requested to submit their reflections on the implementation of the resolutions on the peacebuilding architecture through identical letters dated 31 January 2020 and 3 February 2020 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council (S/2020/91).

\(^{924}\) For more information on relations between the Council and the General Assembly, see part IV, sect. I.
the COVID-19 pandemic across the world, especially in conflict-affected countries. The Council welcomed the progress made in the implementation of the resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace by Member States as well as the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission, and called upon it to continue strengthening its advisory, bridging and convening roles in support of nationally-owned priorities and efforts in the countries and regions under its consideration. The Council noted that peacebuilding financing remained a critical challenge, and therefore took note of the General Assembly decision to convene a high-level meeting in the 76th session to advance, explore and consider options for ensuring adequate, predictable and sustained financing for peacebuilding. By the same resolution, the Council called for a further comprehensive review of United Nations peacebuilding in 2025, and requested the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly and the Council an interim report in 2022 and a second, detailed report in 2024 in advance of the review, as well as to continue to present a report every two years following that review, on continued implementation of the resolutions on peacebuilding and sustaining peace.926

Table 1
Meeting: Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting and date</th>
<th>Sub-item</th>
<th>Other documents</th>
<th>Rule 37 invitations</th>
<th>Rule 39 and other invitations</th>
<th>Speakers</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S/PV.8723 13 February 2020</td>
<td>Transitional justice in conflict and post-conflict situations</td>
<td>Letter dated 4 February 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2020/98)</td>
<td>42 Member States⁴</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; President of the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-Repetition of Colombia; Executive Director of the Foundation for Human Rights in South Africa; Permanent Observer of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC); Head of Delegation of the All Council members⁵ and all invitees⁶</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

925 Resolution 2558 (2020), third and seventh preambular paragraphs.
926 Ibid., paras. 1, 2, 4 and 5.
European Union to the United Nations

Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Egypt, El Salvador, Fiji, the Gambia, Georgia, Guatemala, India, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, Rwanda, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and Ukraine.

Belgium (President of the Security Council) was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence. Niger was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad. Estonia was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Guatemala was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Spain was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation. The representative of Norway spoke on behalf of the five Nordic countries. The representative of Azerbaijan spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. The Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in the meeting via videoconference from Geneva.

Table 2
Videoconferences: Peacebuilding and sustaining peace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Videoconference date</th>
<th>Videoconference record</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12 August 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/799</td>
<td>Letter dated 14 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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 November 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/1090</td>
<td>Letter dated 5 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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>