2. The situation in Somalia

During the year under review, the Security Council held four meetings and adopted six decisions on the situation in Somalia, three of which were under Chapter VII of the Charter. Three meetings took the form of briefings, while one was convened to adopt a decision.\(^21\) More information on the meetings, including on participants and speakers, is provided in table 1 below. In addition, Council members held nine videoconferences in connection with this item in 2020, four of which were held for the announcement of the vote on the various resolutions adopted.\(^22\) 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 the situation in Somalia.\(^23\)

In 2020, the Council heard regular briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), as well as by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia. In addition, Council members also heard a briefing by the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the Director of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and by the Founder and Chairwoman of Somali Gender Equity Movement.

The Special Representative briefed Council members further to the quarterly reports by the Secretary-General.\(^24\) He focused on the preparations for the 2020/21 elections, further informing the Council about the persistent attacks by Al-Shabaab which remained the primary threat to Somalia’s security, as well as about the acute humanitarian situation compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, flooding and locust infestation. At a meeting held on 24 February

\(^{21}\) For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.
\(^{22}\) For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.
\(^{23}\) See A/75/2, part II, chap. 5. See also S/2020/1142 and S/2020/1045.
2020, the Special Representative described 2020 as a potentially transformative year for Somalia with the main priorities reflected in achieving debt relief, holding elections, finalizing the federal constitution, making progress in the fight against Al-Shabaab and consolidating the federal State. He informed the Council about the enactment of the new electoral code on 21 February 2020 and regretted that, whilst an important step, the new law did not address many outstanding questions such as the location of constituencies, guaranteeing the 30 per cent of seats for women and finding modalities for Somalis from across the country to vote. Regarding the security situation, he regretted that despite the efforts of the Somali National Army, the African Union Mission in Somalia and international partners, Al-Shabaab retained the ability to conduct large-scale attacks in Mogadishu, including against the United Nations and the international community.  

25 In a videoconference held on 21 May 2020, the Special Representative focused on the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that it had also slowed the international partner training needed to generate forces for the fight against Al-Shabaab. Furthermore, he urgently called for a commitment to dialogue and improved cooperation between the Federal Government and all of the federal member states, noting that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia had supported those efforts, as directed in resolution 2461 (2019). The Special Representative reassured Council members that the United Nations forces in Somalia remained present, active and committed to delivering their mandate despite the limitations and additional challenges resulting from the global pandemic and the ongoing security threats.  

26 At the 8755th meeting, held on 20 August 2020, the Special Representative provided additional information on electoral preparations, noting that according to the Chairperson of the National Independent Electoral Commission, one-person one-vote elections could take place no earlier than March 2021, and then only if manual voter registration was used, or in August 2021 if the Commission used biometric registration. Affirming that it was up to Somali stakeholders to determine the model that would guide the electoral process, the Special Representative also urged that such a model be arrived at through inclusive dialogue and compromise.  

27 In his last briefing of the year, at a videoconference held on 23 November 2020, the Special Representative told Council

25 See S/PV.8731.
27 See S/PV.8755.
members that the Somali leadership had agreed on an indirect electoral model, regretting that it had fallen short of the constitutional requirement for direct universal suffrage. He further announced that UNSOM had planned to contribute to the implementation of the electoral agreement and urged Somali leaders to prepare consensually a roadmap to ensure that one-person one-vote elections took place in 2024-2025. The Special Representative also noted that Mohamed Hussein Robleh was appointed Prime Minister in September, whose new Government had the challenging task of steering the country through the electoral process and pursuing the reform agenda across the political, security and economic spectrum.28 In his briefings, the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia informed the Council about the progress of AMISOM’s transition plan, announcing that the Mission had completed its drawdown of 1,000 troops by 28 February 2020, as mandated by resolution 2472 (2019). He also briefed on the role of AMISOM related to election security and counter-terrorism.29

In 2020, the Council also heard three briefings by the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia. On 27 February 2020, the Chair reported on his visit to Mogadishu conducted from 21 to 23 January 2020, and noted that the visit was an important opportunity to help raise awareness of the purpose and scope of the sanctions measures, stressing that the sanctions regime was not static, that it was regularly reviewed and had evolved over the years to reflect changing circumstances.30 At a videoconference held on 9 June 2020, the Chair informed Council members about the Committee’s meeting with UNMAS regarding the implementation of the improvised explosive device (IED)-components ban.31 In this context, UNMAS had tasked the Panel of Experts with preparing an implementation assistance notice, aimed at providing guidance to all Member States

30 See S/PV.8735.
31 See S/2020/529.
on the implementation of the IED-components ban, which was adopted by the Committee on 3 August 2020.\(^{32}\)

During 2020, discussions among Council members centred on Somalia’s preparation for one-person one-vote elections, relations between the Federal Government and federal member states, the security situation in the country, and concerns about the worsening human rights and humanitarian conditions.

Concerning elections, Council members welcomed the adoption of the electoral law in February 2020, underlining the need to address unresolved questions with a view to making the law implementable, and to organize free and fair elections. Council members further noted the importance of respecting the principles agreed to in the Mutual Accountability Framework, including the issue of women’s participation in the electoral process.\(^{33}\) In addition, Council members mentioned the importance of holding timely and inclusive elections based on a broad agreement among all relevant stakeholders.\(^{34}\) Regarding the overall political situation in the country, Council members welcomed the resumption of dialogue between the Federal Government and federal member states in August 2020, further calling on all stakeholders to work together to reach an agreement on the constitutional review.\(^{35}\)

With regard to the security situation in Somalia, Council members deliberated on the post-2021 security model, noting the importance of a Somali-led transition plan and expressing concern over Al-Shabaab as the main source of violence and primary threat to the country’s security.\(^{36}\) In this context, several members noted the use of improvised explosive devices by Al-

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32 See S/2020/529 and S/2020/1079. For further information on the mandate of the Committee, see part IX, sect. I. B.

33 See S/PV.8731, United Kingdom, United States, Dominican Republic and Russian Federation.

34 See S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium, Dominican Republic, United States, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Estonia, Viet Nam, Germany, China and France.

35 See S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Estonia, China and Indonesia.

36 See S/PV.8731, United States, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Belgium; S/PV.8755, Belgium and United States.
Shabaab in its terrorist attacks.\textsuperscript{37} In relation to AMISOM, several Council members underscored the importance of its drawdown taking place in line with the threat assessments on the ground and the established transition plan from AMISOM to the Somali security forces.\textsuperscript{38} During the meetings held in February and August, the representative of France noted that it was necessary to continue to implement the security transition plan from AMISOM to the Somali security forces with a view to transferring the security responsibilities by the end of 2021.\textsuperscript{39} At the same meetings, the representatives of the three African members and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines stated their position that any reconfiguration or drawdown of AMISOM had to be conditions-based and not lead to a security vacuum,\textsuperscript{40} and the representative of the Russian Federation objected to attempts by a number of countries to forcibly expedite the drawdown of AMISOM.\textsuperscript{41}

In February, May and August, Council members also discussed the impact of climate on the security and humanitarian situation in the country. Council members noted that humanitarian challenges were compounded by the triple threat of desert locust infestation, flood and drought cycles and the COVID-19 pandemic.\textsuperscript{42}

On the human rights front, several Council members expressed concern over the new bill on sexual intercourse-related crimes and called for the protection of children, women and girls and the respect of Somalia’s international obligations.\textsuperscript{43} In addition, several Council members raised concerns over the freedom of expression, and the representative of Estonia called on the Federal Government of Somalia to take steps to establish a national human rights commission.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{37} See S/2020/436, Estonia, Indonesia, Russian Federation, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), and United Kingdom; and S/PV.8755, Dominican Republic, Russian Federation and Indonesia.

\textsuperscript{38} See S/PV.8731, United Kingdom, Indonesia, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and Estonia.

\textsuperscript{39} See S/PV.8731 and S/PV.8755.

\textsuperscript{40} See S/PV.8731, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, South Africa, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) and S/PV.8755, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines).

\textsuperscript{41} See S/PV.8755.

\textsuperscript{42} See S/PV.8731, S/2020/436 and S/PV.8755.

\textsuperscript{43} See S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium, South Africa (also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Estonia, Germany and France.

\textsuperscript{44} See S/PV.8731, United Kingdom, Germany, France and S/PV.8755, United Kingdom, Belgium and Estonia.
In 2020, the Council adopted six resolutions in connection with this item, three of which were under Chapter VII of the Charter. By resolutions 2516 (2020) and 2527 (2020), adopted unanimously on 30 March and 22 June, the Council provided for two sequential technical roll-overs of the mandate of UNSOM for periods of three and two months until 30 June 2020 and 31 August 2020, respectively.\(^{45}\) On 28 August, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2540 (2020), extending the mandate of UNSOM for a period of one year until 31 August 2021.\(^{46}\) In addition to reiterating the existing mandate, the Council decided that UNSOM would continue to coordinate the United Nations efforts, with a particular focus on, inter alia, providing support, through the exercise of its good offices and through technical, operational and logistical assistance for the delivery of elections enabling as many citizens as possible to vote in 2020/2021.\(^{47}\) It further mandated UNSOM to provide support to the Federal Government of Somalia in the implementation of the 2019 Mutual Accountability Framework (MAF) for Somalia.\(^{48}\) The Council urged the Somali authorities to create a conducive political and security climate for inclusive elections across Somalia and called upon all Federal Member States to allow the National Independent Electoral Commission to operate freely to deliver an agreed electoral model.\(^{49}\) The Council also underlined the need for the Federal Government of Somalia to establish and operationalise the National Human Rights Commission and urged the Federal Government of Somalia, with the support of the United Nations, to accelerate the implementation of the Joint Communiqué and the adoption and implementation of the new National Action Plan to Combat Sexual Violence in Conflict.\(^{50}\) In addition, the Council requested the United Nations, the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states to consider the adverse implications of climate change, other ecological changes, natural disasters, among other factors, in their programmes in Somalia.\(^{51}\)

\(^{45}\) Resolutions 2516 (2020), para. 1 and 2527 (2020), para. 1. For further information on the mandate of UNSOM, see part X, sect. II.

\(^{46}\) Resolution 2540 (2020), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of UNSOM, see part X, sect. II.

\(^{47}\) Ibid., para. 5(c).

\(^{48}\) Ibid., para. 5(i).

\(^{49}\) Ibid., para. 7.

\(^{50}\) Ibid., para. 12.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., para. 13.
Acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, on 29 May 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2520 (2020), authorizing the Member States of the African Union to maintain the deployment of 19,626 uniformed AMISOM personnel until 28 February 2021, inclusive of a minimum of 1,040 AMISOM police personnel including five Formed Police Units, to support security preparations for elections due at the end of 2020 or the beginning of 2021, and to conduct tasks in line with an updated Somali-led Transition Plan and the handover of security to Somali security forces by 2021. It also decided that AMISOM would be authorised to take all necessary measures to carry out its mandate.\textsuperscript{52} By this resolution, the Council also urged the Federal Government of Somalia and federal member states to take concrete action to fulfil the priority measures in the 2019 Mutual Accountability Framework essential to Somali security and underlined its intention to assess the security support needed to prepare Somalia towards taking on the leading role on security by the end of 2021 and post-2021.\textsuperscript{53}

On 12 November 2020, the Council adopted resolution 2551 (2020), under Chapter VII of the Charter, with the abstention of China and the Russian Federation. By this resolution, the Council reaffirmed the arms embargo and renewed the exemptions on deliveries of weapons and military equipment or the provision of technical advice, financial and other assistance, and training related to military activities intended solely for the development of the Somali National Security Forces or Somalia security sector institutions.\textsuperscript{54} For the first time, the Council renewed the humanitarian exemption to the assets freeze without specifying an expiry date.\textsuperscript{55} The Council also recalled previous decisions regarding the asset freeze and travel ban measures, as well as the ban on charcoal.\textsuperscript{56} By the same resolution, the Council also renewed the maritime interdiction of charcoal and weapons or military equipment until 15 November 2021,\textsuperscript{57} and reaffirmed the ban on components of improvised explosive devices imposed by resolution 2498 (2019).\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{52} Resolution 2520 (2020), paras. 9, 10 and 11. For more information on the mandate of AMISOM, see part VIII, sect. IV.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., paras. 2 and 5.
\textsuperscript{54} Resolution 2551 (2020), paras. 6 to 8, 9 to 18.
\textsuperscript{55} Ibid., para. 22.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., paras. 20 to 22 and 23 to 25.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., para. 23.
\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., para. 26. For further information on the sanctions measures concerning Somalia, see part VII, sect. III. See also Repertoire, Supplement 2019, part I.
addition, the Council renewed the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Somalia until 15 December 2021. Explaining their abstention, the representatives of China and the Russian Federation stated that their concerns and observations were not taken on board during the consultations on the draft resolution. Specifically, the representative of China noted that the proposal to explore benchmarks for assessing the appropriateness of lifting the arms embargo were not taken on board in the resolution and that the text failed to duly respond to the strong desire of the Somali Government to have the arms embargo lifted. In addition, he said that the text failed to effectively address the concerns of Djibouti and Eritrea, encouraging both countries to improve their ties through bilateral consultations. Similarly, the representative of the Russian Federation deemed inappropriate the inclusion of paragraphs on Djibouti and Eritrea in a document focusing on Somalia. She also regretted the continued practice of using Council resolutions to promote human rights-related aspects of the Somalia dossier, stressing that there was a separate body – the Human Rights Council – that existed to address those issues. In response, the representative of the United Kingdom stated that given the divergent views between the parties and among Council members regarding the relations between Djibouti and Eritrea, the text of the resolution was the fairest outcome and the best way to ensure that the Council could support further progress towards resolving those outstanding issues.

On 4 December 2020, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2554 (2020) under Chapter VII of the Charter, renewing for a further period of 12 months the authorizations set out in paragraph 14 of resolution 2500 (2019), granted to States and regional organizations cooperating with Somali authorities in the fight against piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.

59 Ibid., para. 30. For further information on the mandate of the Panel, see part IX, sect. I.
60 See S/PV.8775, China and Russian Federation.
61 Ibid.

Part I – Overview of Security Council Activities in the Maintenance of International Peace and Security
Table 1
Meetings: The situation in Somalia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting record 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.8735 27 February 2020</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia</td>
<td>10 Council members, Somalia</td>
<td>China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. The representative of Belgium spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/PV.8755 20 August 2020</td>
<td>Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Somalia (S/2020/798)</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia</td>
<td>12 Council members, all invitees</td>
<td>China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. The representative of Belgium spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992).</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tunisia spoke also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia participated in the meeting via videoconference from Addis Ababa.

China, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and South Africa), United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam. The representative of Belgium spoke in his capacity as Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 751 (1992).

South Africa spoke also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia participated in the meeting via videoconference from Mogadishu.


### Table 2
**Videoconferences: The situation in Somalia**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Videoconference date</th>
<th>Videoconference record</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21 May 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/436</td>
<td>Letter dated 27 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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 June 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/529</td>
<td>Letter dated 11 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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 October 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/1079</td>
<td>Letter dated 30 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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 November 2020</td>
<td>S/2020/1136</td>
<td>Letter dated 25 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>

* Due to technical difficulties, instead of an open videoconference to announce the vote on resolution 2516 (2020) the videoconference was closed. For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.