

37. Threats to international peace and security

During the period under review, the Council held seven meetings, including one high-level meeting, and adopted two resolutions in connection with the item entitled “Threats to international peace and security”. One meeting was held as a debate, one was held as an open debate, two were convened to adopt decisions of the Council and three took the form of briefings.⁶⁷¹ The Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD), established pursuant to resolution 2379 (2017), until 21 September 2020.⁶⁷² More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.

In 2019, the Council held two thematic discussions under this item on mercenary activities as a source of insecurity and destabilization in Africa and on the linkages between international terrorism and organized crime. In connection with the latter, the Council adopted resolution 2482 (2019). The Council also held three meetings under this item to discuss the progress of the work of UNITAD. In addition, the Council held a dedicated briefing to discuss the issue of the acquisition, proliferation, deployment and use of missiles, including ballistic missiles, in armed conflict, against the backdrop of heightened tensions relating to the United States’ withdrawal from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and subsequent medium-range missile testing.

On 4 February 2019, at the initiative of Equatorial Guinea, which held the Presidency for the month,⁶⁷³ the Council held a high-level debate under the sub-item entitled “Mercenary activities as a source of insecurity and destabilization in Africa”.⁶⁷⁴ At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Secretary-General and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. In his briefing, the Secretary-General focused on the use of mercenaries and other foreign fighters and the negative impact of their activities in worsening conflict and threatening stability. He called for the bolstering of legal regimes to combat mercenary activities, globally and nationally, for increased bilateral, regional and international cooperation, particularly in border management and

building the capacity of national institutions responsible for justice, security and human rights, and for enhanced efforts to create opportunities for young people in order to reduce the lure of mercenaries and the threat of radicalization. He also said that the gender dimensions of mercenary activity must be addressed. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission focused his briefing on the historical link between mercenary activities and destabilization in Africa, as well as on its consequences. He also expressed concern about the emergence of private security companies that transact with Governments in the region. He called for the strengthening of international instruments related to the phenomenon of mercenarism and the provision of increased capacity assistance to States to address that scourge, and underscored that the fight against it must be part of the overall context of promoting peace and security on the continent. The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda, speaking on behalf of the President of Rwanda in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union, indicated that, in addition to being involved in active combat, mercenary groups were also increasingly engaging in cyberattacks and industrial espionage. He called for collective, coordinated efforts at the regional and international level focused on disrupting financial networks and cross-border recruitment for mercenary activities. In the ensuing discussion, Council members and invitees agreed that the phenomenon of mercenarism constituted a threat to peace and security in Africa and elaborated on its root causes and impact on the continent, with a focus on the Central African region. They called for international, regional and subregional cooperation to find solutions for the prevention of mercenarism, support States in the region to strengthen the rule of law, and address the gaps in the international legal framework for ending impunity in the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries and foreign fighters. Speakers also discussed the need to improve oversight and regulation of private military companies active in the region.

On 9 July 2019, at the initiative of Peru, which held the Presidency for the month,⁶⁷⁵ the Council held an open debate under the sub-item entitled “Linkages between international terrorism and organized crime”.⁶⁷⁶ During the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the

⁶⁷¹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁶⁷² See resolution 2490 (2019), para. 2.

⁶⁷³ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 31 January 2019 (S/2019/97).

⁶⁷⁴ See S/PV.8456.

⁶⁷⁵ The Council had before it a concept note annexed to a letter dated 27 June 2019 (S/2019/537).

⁶⁷⁶ See S/PV.8569.

Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and an international consultant at the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. The Executive Director of UNODC highlighted four priorities for addressing the linkages between transnational organized crime and terrorism: effective implementation of international commitments; provision of technical assistance to build up specialized expertise and capacities, including training for law enforcement agents; reinforcement of investment mechanisms for inter-agency, regional and international cooperation, including information- and intelligence-sharing; and integration of action against terrorism and crime across the pillars of the United Nations. He also gave the Council a briefing on the activities of UNODC to address trafficking in persons and firearms, prevent radicalization and recruitment in prisons, and combat corruption and illicit financing of criminal and terrorist activities. The Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate gave the Council a briefing on the activities of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and discussed the need to intensify and accelerate the exchange of financial intelligence in order to identify potential linkages between terrorism and organized crime, strengthen the role of financial intelligence units, overcome inter-institutional barriers to information-sharing at the investigative and prosecutorial levels, and conduct terrorism financing national risk assessments. The international consultant at the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute summarized her research findings on the crime-terrorism nexus, concluding that there was no doubt that linkages between organized crime and terrorism existed, and warned that expanded linkages could increase vulnerability to terrorism by groups with enhanced criminal capacities while also increasing vulnerability to criminal groups with a heightened propensity towards the use of indiscriminate violence. Following the briefings, speakers discussed the relationship between organized crime and terrorism as a threat to international peace and security and the response at the national, regional and international levels in order to dismantle criminal networks and combat terrorism.

Following the open debate, on 19 July 2019, the Council unanimously adopted resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#). In the resolution, the Council called on Member States to enhance the coordination of efforts in the global response to linkages between international terrorism and organized crime, and requested the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate to integrate those issues into its country assessments and

analyses.⁶⁷⁷ The Council also called upon Member States to strengthen efforts to counter illicit activities that could contribute to the financing of terrorism, such as illegal production of and trafficking in drugs and weapons and trafficking in persons, and other crimes such as the illicit exploitation and trafficking of natural resources, metals and minerals. The Council also underlined the importance of border management cooperation and regional and subregional coordination to combat illicit activities across borders.⁶⁷⁸ It further urged Member States to strengthen the capacity of criminal justice systems to combat the linkages between international terrorism and organized crime, called upon them to enhance the exchange of information between public authorities and relevant private sector entities, and encouraged them to explore ways to prevent radicalization to violence within their prison systems and impede the transfer of skills and knowledge between terrorists and other criminals.⁶⁷⁹

With regard to the work of UNITAD, the Council heard briefings by the Special Adviser and Head of the Investigative Team twice in 2019,⁶⁸⁰ following his first briefing to the Council on 4 December 2018.⁶⁸¹ After presenting his second and third reports,⁶⁸² he explained that the Investigative Team had made significant progress in the collection, gathering and analysis of digital, testimonial and forensic evidence with respect to the three core areas identified, namely, crimes in Mosul, Sinjar and Speicher. He informed the Council that the Investigative Team had further expanded the scope of investigations to cover diverse communities, regardless of race, religion, tribe or ethnic origin. He also reported that the Investigative Team had received three formal requests from States with respect to its role in supporting domestic prosecutions in relation to crimes committed by Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), in addition to inquiries from other States. Most Council members expressed support for the work of the Investigative Team, while some reiterated the need for the Investigative Team to fully respect the national sovereignty of Iraq and its jurisdiction over crimes committed on Iraqi territory.⁶⁸³ Following the

⁶⁷⁷ Resolution [2482 \(2019\)](#), paras. 1 and 23.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, paras. 4, 7, 13 and 15.

⁶⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, paras. 15 and 19–20.

⁶⁸⁰ See [S/PV.8573](#) and [S/PV.8675](#).

⁶⁸¹ For more information on UNITAD, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2018*, part VI, sect. II, and part IX, sect. III.

⁶⁸² [S/2019/407](#) and [S/2019/878](#).

⁶⁸³ See [S/PV.8573](#) (Kuwait, Indonesia, Russian Federation, China and Dominican Republic) and [S/PV.8675](#) (Kuwait, Indonesia, China, Equatorial Guinea, Dominican Republic and Russian Federation).

briefings, on 20 September 2019, at the request of the Government of Iraq,⁶⁸⁴ the Council unanimously adopted resolution 2490 (2019), by which it extended the mandate of the Special Adviser and the Investigative Team until 21 September 2020.⁶⁸⁵

In addition to the above activity of the Council in connection with this item, on 22 August 2019, at the request of the Russian Federation, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.⁶⁸⁶ During her briefing, she indicated that the recent collapse of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty had removed one of the few constraints on the development and deployment of destabilizing and dangerous classes of missiles, and underscored that preventing the spread and emergence of destabilizing weapons remained a vital unfinished task for the international community in its shared endeavour to preserve international peace, security and stability. At the meeting, Council members discussed the issue of the acquisition, proliferation, deployment and use of missiles, including ballistic missiles, in armed conflict. Most Council members lamented the termination of the Treaty due to alleged violations of the Treaty, warned against the threat to international peace and security posed by nuclear proliferation and called for enhanced arms control arrangements and nuclear disarmament. The representative of the Russian Federation said that following the United States' withdrawal from the

Treaty on 2 August 2019, the United States had carried out a test launch of a medium-range missile using an MK-41 launch system on 18 August 2019, underscoring that since August, there had been no restrictions on the development and deployment of such systems. The representative of the United States noted that his country's decision to withdraw from the Treaty was in response to the non-compliance of the Russian Federation with its own obligations, noting that the Russian Federation had pursued a missile system with a range prohibited by the Treaty and had developed, produced, tested and fielded multiple battalions of its non-compliant 9M729 missile system over the previous several years. The representative of the United States further indicated that his country's recent flight test did not violate the United States' obligations. He added that China possessed approximately 2,000 missiles that would have been prohibited had China been part of the Treaty and that China had deployed thousands of intermediate-range missiles, posing a risk to the United States and its allies. The representative of the United States also noted that since the Treaty no longer existed, his country was taking the steps necessary to address the threat posed by the intermediate-range missiles being deployed by both China and the Russian Federation. In response, the representative of China said that it was unacceptable for the United States to use China as an excuse to withdraw from the Treaty and underlined that his country's land-based intermediate-range missiles were all deployed within Chinese territory, were for defence purposes only and posed no threat to any other country.

⁶⁸⁴ See [S/2019/760](#).

⁶⁸⁵ Resolution 2490 (2019), para. 2.

⁶⁸⁶ See [S/PV.8602](#).

Meetings: threats to international peace and security

<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.8456 4 February 2019	Mercenary activities as a source of insecurity and destabilization in Africa		Eight Member States ^a	Chairperson of the African Union Commission	Secretary-General, all Council members, ^b all invitees ^c	
	Letter dated 31 January 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Equatorial Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/97)					

Repertoire of the Practice of the Security Council, 2019

<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.8569 9 July 2019	Linkages between international terrorism and organized crime Letter dated 27 June 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Peru to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2019/537)		39 Member States ^d	Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, international consultant at the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Permanent Observer and Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross to the United Nations	All Council members, all invitees ^e	
S/PV.8573 15 July 2019	Letter dated 17 May 2019 from the Special Adviser and Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (UNITAD) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/407)		Iraq	Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8582 19 July 2019		Draft resolution submitted by 46 Member States ^f (S/2019/580)	37 Member States ^g		Two Council members (Russian Federation, Peru) ^h	Resolution 2482 (2019) (15-0-0)
S/PV.8602 22 August 2019				Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs	All Council members, invitee	

**Part I. Consideration of questions under the responsibility of
the Security Council for the maintenance of
international peace and security**

<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.8624 20 September 2019	Letter dated 19 September 2019 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/760)	Draft resolution submitted by United Kingdom (S/2019/761)				Resolution 2490 (2019) (15-0-0)
S/PV.8675 26 November 2019	Letter dated 13 November 2019 from the Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/878)		Iraq	Special Adviser and Head of UNITAD, civil society briefer	All Council members, all invitees ⁱ	

^a Central African Republic, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Congo, Rwanda and Sudan.

^b Equatorial Guinea (President of the Council) was represented by its President. Cote d'Ivoire was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs. The representative of China spoke in his capacity as Special Representative of its President.

^c The Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda participated in the meeting on behalf of the President of Rwanda in his capacity as Chairperson of the African Union. Gabon was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Regional Integration. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission participated in the meeting by videoconference from Addis Ababa.

^d Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Guatemala, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Liechtenstein, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Netherlands, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Slovenia, Spain, Sudan, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

^e The Executive Director of UNODC participated in the meeting by videoconference from Vienna. The representative of Norway spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries; and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union 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 and Ukraine.

^f Angola, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Guinea, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^g Angola, Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Guinea, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Palau, Portugal, Qatar, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and United Arab Emirates.

^h Peru (President of the Council) was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs.

ⁱ The civil society briefer participated in the meeting by videoconference from Iraq.

38. Maintenance of international peace and security

During the period under review, the Council held seven meetings, including two high-level meetings, under the item entitled "Maintenance of international peace and security". The Council adopted one resolution under Chapter VII of the Charter and issued one presidential statement. Of the seven meetings, two

were briefings to the Council, two were debates, one was an open debate and two were convened to adopt decisions.⁶⁸⁷ More information on the meetings,

⁶⁸⁷ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.