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# Africa

## 1. The situation concerning Western Sahara

During 2019, the Council held two meetings and adopted two resolutions on the situation concerning Western Sahara. The two meetings under the item were convened to adopt resolutions [2468 \(2019\)](#) and [2494 \(2019\)](#), by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).<sup>2</sup> In 2019, the Council also met twice with countries contributing police and troops to MINURSO.<sup>3</sup> More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below. In addition to those meetings, the Council held informal consultations of the whole to discuss the situation in Western Sahara.<sup>4</sup>

On 30 April 2019, the Council adopted resolution [2468 \(2019\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of MINURSO for a period of six months, until 31 October 2019.<sup>5</sup> The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour and 2 abstentions. In the resolution, the Council emphasized the need to achieve a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution to the question of Western Sahara and expressed its full support for the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to sustain the renewed negotiations process, noting the intention of the Personal Envoy to invite Morocco, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y de Río de Oro, Algeria, and Mauritania to meet again in the same format.<sup>6</sup> In that connection, the Council called upon the parties to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.<sup>7</sup>

After the vote,<sup>8</sup> Council members reaffirmed their support for the efforts of the Personal Envoy and for the political process launched in Geneva in December 2018, in which the parties to the conflict were brought together for the first time since 2012. Regarding the mandate extension, some Council members<sup>9</sup> were of the view that the mandate of MINURSO should have been renewed for a period of 12 months instead of 6 months. The representative of the United States expressed his disappointment regarding the abstention of some members despite sincere efforts to underscore the unity of the Council with regard to the ongoing political process. The representative of South Africa explained that his abstention had been due to his concerns that the adopted text did not provide “a true reflection of the efforts undertaken by the two parties” and stated that the mandate, as approved, tended to favour one party over the other, which was not conducive to a neutral political process. He stated that the Council must reaffirm its commitment to the right to self-determination for the people of Western Sahara in an unqualified manner. The representative of South Africa also expressed regret for the lack of a human rights monitoring mandate for MINURSO, despite the fact that such mechanisms had been proposed for other missions, and added that that lack of consistency undermined the Council’s credibility. Having also abstained in the voting, the representative of the Russian Federation expressed regret about the amendments that had been introduced in recent years into the resolutions extending the Mission’s mandate. In his view, those amendments undermined the Council’s impartial and objective approach to the issue of Western Sahara. He added that eroding previously approved parameters was unacceptable, as they defined the parties to the conflict and provided for ultimately reaching a mutually acceptable solution that would guarantee the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. He further stated that, just as his delegation had disagreed with the artificial modification of those parameters in prior years, it was unable to support such an approach with regard to resolution [2468 \(2019\)](#).

On 30 October 2019, the Council adopted resolution [2494 \(2019\)](#), again extending the mandate of MINURSO, but this time for one year, until 31 October

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

<sup>3</sup> Held on 9 April and 8 October 2019, under 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”; see [S/PV.8505](#) and [S/PV.8637](#).

<sup>4</sup> See [S/2019/910](#) and [S/2020/29](#).

<sup>5</sup> Resolution [2468 \(2019\)](#), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of MINURSO, see part X, sect. I.

<sup>6</sup> Resolution [2468 \(2019\)](#), paras. 2–3.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 4.

<sup>8</sup> See [S/PV.8518](#).

<sup>9</sup> France, Côte d’Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait and Dominican Republic.

2020,<sup>10</sup> in line with the practice prior to 2018. The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour and 2 abstentions. In the resolution, the Council paid tribute to the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and commended his efforts in holding the round-table process, which had created new momentum in the political process, and reiterated the expression of its full support for the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and his incoming Personal Envoy to sustain the renewed negotiations process in order to achieve a solution to the question of Western Sahara.<sup>11</sup>

After the vote,<sup>12</sup> Council members<sup>13</sup> paid tribute to the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, who had resigned, for having advanced the political process, and stressed the need for the Secretary-General to appoint a successor soon, in order to maintain the momentum and build on the progress achieved. Most speakers<sup>14</sup> expressed support for the return to the 12-month mandate renewal cycle. The representative of

the Russian Federation explained that his delegation had abstained because it disagreed with the modifications that had been made to the resolutions extending the mandate of MINURSO. The representative of South Africa explained his country's abstention on several grounds. He took issue with some elements of the text of the resolution, indicating that his delegation considered that the text was not balanced and that the language used undermined the principle of self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. He expressed his country's preference for a 6-month instead of a 12-month mandate renewal period, which would have allowed the Council to meet regularly to consider the progress made on the appointment of the Personal Envoy and the status of the political process. He welcomed the reference to human rights in the preambular paragraphs of the resolution, but reiterated that there was a need for a formal human rights mandate for MINURSO in order to strengthen the monitoring of possible human rights violations on all sides. He also raised serious concerns about the Council's working methods on the matter, questioning the delegation of responsibility to the Group of Friends of Western Sahara. With respect to the working methods of the Council, the representative of China expressed the hope that, in the future, consultations in the Council on draft resolutions to renew the mandate of MINURSO would be more conducive to arriving at a more balanced text and reaching a consensus.

<sup>10</sup> Resolution 2494 (2019), para. 1.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, third preambular paragraph and para. 3. For further information on the mandate of MINURSO, see *Repertoire, Supplement 1989–1992 to Supplement 2018*.

<sup>12</sup> See [S/PV.8651](#).

<sup>13</sup> United States, United Kingdom, China, Peru, Indonesia, Germany and South Africa.

<sup>14</sup> United Kingdom, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Kuwait, Indonesia, France, Germany and Poland.

## Meetings: the situation concerning Western Sahara

<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>
<a href="#">S/PV.8518</a> 30 April 2019	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara ( <a href="#">S/2019/282</a> )	Draft resolution submitted by United States ( <a href="#">S/2019/349</a> )			12 Council members <sup>a</sup>	Resolution <a href="#">2468 (2019)</a> 13-0-2 <sup>b</sup>
<a href="#">S/PV.8651</a> 30 October 2019	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara ( <a href="#">S/2019/787</a> )	Draft resolution submitted by United States ( <a href="#">S/2019/847</a> )			14 Council members <sup>c</sup>	Resolution <a href="#">2494 (2019)</a> 13-0-2 <sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>b</sup> *For*: Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, United States; *against*: none; *abstaining*: Russian Federation, South Africa.

<sup>c</sup> China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>d</sup> *For*: Belgium, China, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, France, Germany, Indonesia, Kuwait, Peru, Poland, United Kingdom, United States; *against*: none; *abstaining*: Russian Federation, South Africa.