

21. The situation concerning Iraq

During the period under review, the Security Council held three meetings in relation to the item entitled “The situation concerning Iraq”. On 27 May 2021, the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) until 27 May 2022, through the unanimous adoption of resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#).⁷⁸² All other meetings under this item during the period under review took the form of briefings.⁷⁸³ More information on these meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in table 1 below. Council members also held a total of two open videoconferences in connection with this item. More information on the videoconferences is provided in table 2 below. In addition to the meetings and open videoconferences, Council members held closed videoconferences and informal consultations to discuss this item.⁷⁸⁴

In 2021, the Council heard regular briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on the situation concerning Iraq. In her briefings further to the quarterly reports of the Secretary-General,⁷⁸⁵ she provided updates to Council members on the preparation for parliamentary elections scheduled for 10 October 2021, including on the increased electoral support provided by UNAMI, pursuant to resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#). The Special Representative also continued to inform the Council regarding the relations between Baghdad and Erbil and the status of negotiations between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal Government. The Special Representative also reported to Council members on the status of the implementation of economic reforms by the federal Government and on the continued threat of terrorism posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da’esh). Regarding the situation of human rights, she spoke about the persecution of protesters, the need for accountability and justice, and the closure of camps for internally displaced Iraqis. The Special Representative also provided progress reports regarding the issue of

⁷⁸² For more information on the mandate of UNAMI, part X, sect. II.

⁷⁸³ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. II.

⁷⁸⁴ See [A/76/2](#), part II, chap. 28. See also [S/2021/1060](#) and [S/2021/683](#).

⁷⁸⁵ See [S/2021/120](#), [S/2021/426](#), [S/2021/700](#), and [S/2021/946](#). See also [S/2021/93](#), [S/2021/395](#), [S/2021/689](#), [S/2021/930](#) and [S/2021/932](#).

missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives.

On 16 February 2021, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI reported on the financial and economic difficulties facing Iraq, as well as on the status of the Iraqi parliamentary elections – which were to be held on 10 October 2021, four months later than originally planned. She expressed concerns over the delays in the electoral calendar and emphasized that for credible elections to take place, it was imperative that parties, candidates and members of the media operated in a free and safe environment. The Special Representative underlined that regardless of the response by the Council to the request from the Government of Iraq for electoral observation, the elections would be Iraqi-led and Iraqi-owned at all times. She expressed concern that transparency, justice and accountability remained largely absent throughout Iraq, including in the Kurdistan region, particularly when it came to the repression of public protests. Regarding the economic situation, while indicating that a 40 per cent increase in oil revenues since November 2020 had eased the liquidity crisis, she lamented the lack of progress in the implementation of much-needed reform measures. The Special Representative also covered other topics, including the closure of camps for internally displaced Iraqis and the issue of missing Kuwaitis, third-country nationals and Kuwaiti property.⁷⁸⁶

On 11 May 2021, the Special Representative reported on the preparations for the 10 October parliamentary elections. While noting that all necessary laws had been adopted, she reiterated her call to all Iraqi stakeholders to uphold the integrity of the electoral process. She lamented that many members of the protest movement, which had demanded for the elections to take place, continued to be persecuted with rampant impunity. Regarding the economic situation, the Special Representative noted that after months of intense political negotiations, the Council of Representatives had approved the federal budget law for 2021. She expressed concern, however, that the budget remained heavily reliant on the oil sector, and also reported minimal progress in the implementation of the White Paper for Economic and Financial Reform. Turning to the Baghdad-Erbil relations, she indicated that while the parties continued to express their willingness to come to the table, sustainable progress would remain elusive in the absence of

⁷⁸⁶ See [S/2021/152](#).

institutionalized, regular and structured dialogue. The Special Representative also expressed concern that in the context of the upcoming elections, disagreements between the two capitals could easily be exploited to amplify divisions. She also noted that developments in the Kurdistan region over the past year had given rise to concern about the active curtailment of free expression. She also made reference to the progress on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property as well as to the humanitarian situation affecting internally displaced persons. In addition, she welcomed the passing of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law, which provided for reparations to survivors and legal recognition of the atrocities against women and girls committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant as crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity.⁷⁸⁷

On 27 May 2021, the Council adopted resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#) extending the mandate of UNAMI until 27 May 2022.⁷⁸⁸ In the resolution, the Council commended the efforts by the Government of Iraq to plan and execute free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraq-owned early elections.⁷⁸⁹ Taking into account the letter dated 11 February 2021 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Iraq to the Council,⁷⁹⁰ the Council decided that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General would provide a strengthened, robust and visible United Nations team in advance of the forthcoming elections in Iraq, to monitor the election day and to continue to assist with the election, in a manner that respected Iraqi sovereignty; to engage and coordinate with and provide logistical and security support to international and regional third-party observers; and to launch a UN strategic messaging campaign on election preparations and UN activities in support of the elections.⁷⁹¹ The Council further decided that the Special Representative and UNAMI would advise, support and assist the Government of Iraq and the Independent High Electoral Commission with efforts to plan and execute free and fair Iraqi-led, Iraq-owned elections and referenda.⁷⁹² The Council also requested the Secretary-General to provide a detailed summary

⁷⁸⁷ See [S/2021/474](#).

⁷⁸⁸ Resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#), para. 1. See letter dated 11 February 2021 from the representative of Iraq ([S/2021/135](#)).

⁷⁸⁹ Resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#), fourth preambular paragraph.

⁷⁹⁰ [S/2021/135](#).

⁷⁹¹ Resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#), para. 2.

⁷⁹² *Ibid.*, para. 4 (b)(i).

report to the Council on Iraq's electoral process and the assistance provided by UNAMI to that process within 30 days of the conclusion of the elections.⁷⁹³

On 25 August 2021, the Special Representative provided further updates on the preparations for the parliamentary elections on 10 October 2021. She emphasized that the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) had reached several milestones and that UNAMI continued to provide technical assistance whenever possible. She noted that there were five times as many United Nations personnel engaged in supporting the elections as there had been during the 2018 elections. The Special Representative reported that UNAMI was stepping up its strategic communication efforts to tackle misinformation and manage public expectations, underlining that the lack of trust in the public authorities and institutions was long-standing and widespread. The Special Representative asked the authorities, civil servants, officials, political forces, parties and candidates, not to let the Iraqi people down. Service to the citizens — whatever their background, belief, religion, opinion or conviction — should be their first priority, she said, emphasizing that the focus had to be on solutions that represented the interests of all people. The Special Representative also reported on the developments regarding the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, with a total of 30 cases of missing persons having been formally closed since November 2020.⁷⁹⁴

On 23 November 2021, the Council heard a briefing by the Special Representative focused on the electoral process and the post-electoral environment. She reported that the elections had been assessed as generally peaceful and well run, with significant technical and procedural improvements from previous recent elections. She noted that, while it was understandable that elections and their outcomes could provoke strong feelings, if allowed to give way to undemocratic impulses, such feelings could open the door to intolerable acts. She condemned in the strongest terms the assassination attempt on the Prime Minister on 7 November 2021, and underscored that under no circumstances must terrorism, violence and/or any unlawful acts be allowed to derail the democratic process. The Special Representative emphasized that any concerns of foul play should be addressed to the established legal channels and noted that so far, there had been no evidence of systemic electoral fraud. While noting that

⁷⁹³ Ibid., para. 3.

⁷⁹⁴ See [S/PV.8842](https://www.un.org/en/sc/repertoire).

the risk of continued political deadlock was real, the Special Representative stressed that Iraq desperately needed a government that was able to swiftly and effectively tackle the long list of unfinished domestic business. In that regard, she concluded by stressing the importance of a sound and inclusive process for the formation of the Government. The Special Representative also reported on the progress achieved on the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, emphasizing the importance of the Government of Iraq keeping the momentum and locating the remaining missing persons.⁷⁹⁵ During the meeting, the Council also heard a briefing by the Coordinator of the Iraqi Women's Network, a civil society feminist alliance. The Coordinator of the Iraqi Women's Network shared with the Council her growing concerns over the assassinations, kidnapping, assaults, threats, and defamation of feminist activists and human rights defenders during the protests in 2019 and 2020. She stressed that the elections and the ongoing negotiations to form a new Government were critical both to ensuring women's meaningful participation and to promoting democracy in Iraq. In that connection, she emphasized the critical role of, and need for, women as active participants in Parliament and in negotiations to form the new Government. She also underscored the criticality of an enabling environment for women's engagement and increased participation. The Coordinator of the Iraqi Women's Network highlighted that a national mechanism to support the inclusion of women was critical to ensure oversight of adequate resources for implementing Iraq's national action plan on resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#). In that regard, she urged the Council to call upon the Government of Iraq to create a national council for women's empowerment and allocate the necessary budget to implement the national action plan. In addition, she also urged the Council to call on the Government to ensure accountability for the killing of human rights defenders and civil society activists during the 2019 and 2020 protests.

During the period under review, Council members followed closely the electoral process in Iraq during videoconferences and meetings held in connection with the agenda item. During their deliberations in the first half of the year, Council members emphasized the importance of the parliamentary elections to the political transition, and discussed the request by the Government of Iraq for United Nations electoral assistance.⁷⁹⁶ In August, many Council

⁷⁹⁵ See [S/PV.8910](#).

⁷⁹⁶ See [S/2021/152](#) and [S/2021/474](#).

members welcomed the deployment, pursuant to resolution [2576 \(2021\)](#), of additional United Nations personnel to UNAMI to monitor and support the preparation for the elections in October.⁷⁹⁷ Several Council members welcomed the establishment of a higher committee to promote the participation of women in the elections and to prevent violence against women candidates.⁷⁹⁸ In November, Council members welcomed the orderly and generally peaceful conduct of the parliamentary elections.⁷⁹⁹ Council members also recognized the electoral assistance provided by UNAMI. Many Council members expressed anticipation for the formation of an inclusive Government that addressed the needs and aspirations of all Iraqis.⁸⁰⁰ Some Council members also highlighted the increased participation and representation of women in the electoral process.⁸⁰¹ In connection with the post-electoral security environment, Council members strongly condemned the 7 November assassination attempt against the Prime Minister and all incidents of violence during the post-election period, such as the threats against United Nations personnel and the Independent High Electoral Commission. Several Council members further encouraged all parties to address any concerns regarding the elections through the established legal channels.⁸⁰²

Regarding the political situation, throughout the year, several Council members welcomed recent efforts towards the improvement of the relationship between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government,⁸⁰³ including the agreement on the federal budget law.⁸⁰⁴ Many Council members welcomed the adoption of the Yazidi Female Survivors Law by the Iraqi Parliament.⁸⁰⁵ Several Council members also welcomed renewed cooperation

⁷⁹⁷ See [S/PV.8842](#), United States, Niger, Mexico, Viet Nam, France, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya, United Kingdom, China, Ireland, Tunisia and India.

⁷⁹⁸ See [S/2021/474](#), Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway and the United Kingdom; and [S/PV.8842](#), Estonia, Kenya and Ireland.

⁷⁹⁹ [S/PV.8910](#).

⁸⁰⁰ United States, India, Ireland, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Norway, France, Russian Federation, Estonia, United Kingdom, Kenya, Tunisia and Mexico.

⁸⁰¹ United States, India, Ireland, Norway, Estonia, United Kingdom, Kenya, Tunisia and Mexico.

⁸⁰² India, Norway, Viet Nam, China, France, Niger, Estonia, United Kingdom and Kenya.

⁸⁰³ See [S/2021/152](#), China, India, Mexico, Norway, Tunisia and Viet Nam; [S/PV.8842](#), Norway, Russian Federation, France, Estonia, China, Tunisia and India; [S/PV.8910](#), Russian Federation, Estonia and Tunisia.

⁸⁰⁴ See [S/2021/474](#), China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Norway, Tunisia, United States and Viet Nam.

⁸⁰⁵ See [S/2021/474](#), Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Viet Nam; [S/PV.8842](#), Norway, Estonia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Ireland.

between Iraq and neighbouring countries in the region to address common issues.⁸⁰⁶ Some Council members expressed concern about the lack of accountability for violence perpetrated against protesters, activists and journalists and called for the protection of freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.⁸⁰⁷ In connection with the situation of internally displaced persons, some Council members called for the creation of conditions for safe return.⁸⁰⁸ Regarding the security situation, Council members deplored the continued activity of terrorist groups, including ISIL (Da'esh) in Iraqi territory.⁸⁰⁹ Many Council members discussed the need to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq in the fight against regional and transnational threats, including terrorism.⁸¹⁰ On the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, many Council members welcomed progress in the identification and return of the remains of missing persons.⁸¹¹

During his interventions in Council meetings and videoconferences in connection with the situation in Iraq, the representative of Iraq stressed the importance of United Nations

⁸⁰⁶ See [S/2021/152](#), Niger, Mexico, China, India, Russian Federation and United Kingdom; [S/2021/474](#), Niger, Russian Federation and Viet Nam; [S/PV.8842](#), Niger, Viet Nam, Russian Federation, France, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and India; [S/PV.8910](#), India, Ireland, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Viet Nam, China, France, Niger, Kenya and Mexico.

⁸⁰⁷ See [S/2021/152](#), Estonia, Ireland, Mexico, Niger and Norway; [S/2021/474](#), Estonia, France, Ireland, Norway, Niger, United States; [S/PV.8842](#), United States, Niger, Mexico, France, Norway, Estonia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya and Ireland; [S/PV.8910](#), Ireland, Norway, Niger, Estonia and Mexico.

⁸⁰⁸ See [S/2021/152](#), Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom, Viet Nam and France; [S/2021/474](#), France, India, Norway, United Kingdom and Viet Nam; [S/PV.8842](#), Mexico, Viet Nam, United Kingdom, Ireland and Tunisia; [S/PV.8910](#), Ireland, Viet Nam and Kenya.

⁸⁰⁹ See [S/2021/152](#), China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; [S/2021/474](#), China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Norway, Russian Federation, Tunisia, United Kingdom and United States; [S/PV.8842](#), United States, Niger, Mexico, Russian Federation, France, Norway, Estonia, Kenya, China, Ireland, Tunisia and India; [S/PV.8910](#), India, Ireland, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Viet Nam, China, France, Niger and Kenya.

⁸¹⁰ See [S/2021/152](#), China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Viet Nam; [S/2021/474](#), China, Estonia, France, India, Kenya, Russian Federation, Tunisia and Viet Nam; [S/PV.8842](#), United States, Viet Nam, Russian Federation, Norway, Estonia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya, China, Ireland, Tunisia and India; [S/PV.8910](#), India, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Viet Nam, China, Russian Federation, Kenya, Tunisia and Mexico. For more on discussions relating to the prohibition of the threat or use of force, see part III, Section II.B.

⁸¹¹ See [S/2021/152](#), China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam; [S/2021/474](#), France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom and Viet Nam; [S/PV.8842](#), Niger, Mexico, Viet Nam, Russian Federation, France, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Kenya, United Kingdom, China, Ireland, Tunisia and India; [S/PV.8910](#), India, Ireland, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Viet Nam, China, France, Niger, United Kingdom, Kenya, Tunisia and Mexico.

electoral observation for the success of the electoral process.⁸¹² The representative of Iraq emphasized that terrorism was the greatest threat against Iraqi efforts to rebuild the country, address displacement and deliver humanitarian assistance.⁸¹³ The representative of Iraq also called for his country's territory not to be used to settle political scores or carry out actions under the pretext of combating terrorism and called for respect to the principles of the Charter, including State sovereignty, good-neighbourly relations and cooperation.⁸¹⁴

In addition, developments in 2021 relating to the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh /Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant established pursuant to resolution [2379 \(2017\)](#) were dealt with under the item entitled "Threats to international peace and security".⁸¹⁵

Table 1
Meetings: The situation concerning Iraq

<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>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.8780 27 May 2021	Thirtieth report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2021/395) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 2522 (2020) (S/2021/426)	Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2021/503)				Resolution 2576 (2021) 15-0-0
S/PV.8842 25 August 2021	Thirty-first report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2021/689) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council		Iraq	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI)	All Council members, all invitees	

⁸¹² See [S/2021/152](#); [S/2021/474](#); [S/PV.8842](#); and [S/PV.8910](#).

⁸¹³ See [S/2021/152](#); [S/2021/474](#); and [S/PV.8842](#).

⁸¹⁴ See [S/PV.8842](#); and [S/PV.8910](#).

⁸¹⁵ For further details, see part I, sect. 33 and part IX, sect. III.

<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>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
	resolution 2576 (2021) (S/2021/700)					
S/PV.8910 23 November 2021	Thirty-second report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 2107 (2013) (S/2021/930) Report of the Secretary-General on electoral process in Iraq (S/2021/932) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2576 (2021) (S/2021/946)		Iraq	Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI; Coordinator of the Iraqi Women's Network ^b	All Council members ^a and all invitees	

^a India was represented by its Secretary (CPV & OIA) of the Ministry of External Affairs.

^b The Special Representative and the Coordinator of the Iraqi Women's Network participated in the meeting via videoconference from Baghdad.

Table 2
Videconferences: The situation concerning Iraq

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
16 February 2021	S/2021/152	Letter dated 18 February 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	
11 May 2021	S/2021/474	Letter dated 14 May 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	