5. The situation in the Central African Republic

During the period under review, the Security Council held five meetings and adopted two resolutions, all under Chapter VII of the Charter, in connection with the situation in the Central African Republic. Three of these meetings took the form of briefings and the remaining two were held to adopt a decision of the Council. More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers, and outcomes, is given in the table below. The Council held one private meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). In addition to meetings, Council members held consultations of the whole in connection with the situation in the Central African Republic.

During 2022, Council members heard three briefings on the reports by the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, consistent with the four-month reporting schedule established by resolution 2387 (2017). ¹⁶⁵ Council members also heard briefings by the African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic, the Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, and a civil society representative.

The briefings focused on the political, security, economic, human rights and humanitarian situation in the country. In that regard, the briefers continued to update the Council on the efforts aimed at the revitalization of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic ("the Political Agreement") signed by the authorities and 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February 2019, the implementation of the joint road map adopted under the auspices of the President of Angola on 16 September 2021 by the International Conference on the Great

¹⁶² For more information on format of meetings, see part II.

¹⁶³ The private meeting was held on 7 November 2022 under the item entitled "Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution <u>1353 (2001)</u>, annex II, sections A and B"; see <u>S/PV.9185</u> and <u>A/77/2</u>, part II, chap. 21.F.

¹⁶⁴ See A/77/2, part II, chap. 13.

 $^{^{165}}$ See $\overline{\text{S/PV.8971}}$, $\overline{\text{S/PV.9074}}$ and $\overline{\text{S/PV.9156}}$. For reports of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic, see $\overline{\text{S/2022/119}}$, $\overline{\text{S/2022/491}}$ and $\overline{\text{S/2022/762}}$.

Lakes Region, and the republican dialogue launched in March 2022 by the Government with the political parties and key forces. The briefers also apprised the Council on the preparations for the local elections, the status of the 15 October 2021 ceasefire, the activities of armed groups, including Coalition des patriotes pour le changement and their impact on security, elections and the provision of humanitarian assistance, the efforts to fight impunity for human rights violations, and the role of MINUSCA.

On 22 February, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, congratulating the new Prime Minister, said that he and his Government would have to overcome the challenges of the implementation of the Political Agreement, the organization of the republican dialogue and the restoration of state authority. 166 He briefed the Council on two visits by the representatives of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to the Central African Republic in January and February 2022 to advance the effective implementation of the road map and enable the establishment and development of the terms of reference of a follow-up working group to monitor the road map. He briefed the Council on the ways in which MINUSCA was contributing to advancing the political process through its good offices, the support of the Mission in preparing the local elections, and through establishing a climate of trust between the Government and the opposition leading to the return of the opposition to the organizing committee of the republican dialogue, which had resumed its work. He recalled that the security situation remained concerning and was marked by military offensives and continued reports of human rights violations. He commended the efforts of the Government to make operational the Commission on Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation, and the first public hearing of the Special Criminal Court as signs of progress in fighting impunity.

The African Union Special Representative, taking note of the political tensions surrounding the preparations for the republican dialogue, outlined some issues that remained to be addressed by its organizing committee, including the choice of topics, the presidium and the list of participants. He welcomed the initiatives and efforts of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region in the context of the road map to mobilize the subregion in promoting dialogue in the country, including contacts with the leaders of the Coalition des patriotes pour le

¹⁶⁶ See S/PV.8971.

changement and the regrouping of its combatants. He informed that an offensive by the Forces armées centrafricaines forces, supported by bilateral forces, to decrease the potential trouble-making of armed groups was under way.

The Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region focused on the major political, security and humanitarian developments in the country. He commended the Government for establishing the organizing committee of the republican dialogue. He stressed that the implementation of the Political Agreement faced challenges owing to many interlinked factors, and the Government's institutional capacity to expeditiously implement the Agreement was hampered by both financial and non-financial challenges. He briefed on the obstacles to the holding of the local elections, including those related to voter registration and education. He expressed concerns regarding the humanitarian and security situation, highlighting continued displacement, poverty and unemployment, as well as abuses against civilians and attacks on defence and security forces.

On 22 June, the Special Representative updated the Council on the efforts aimed at the revitalization of the peace process as well as the repositioning of MINUSCA. ¹⁶⁷ She briefed on her efforts to remobilize the region since she had taken office, culminating, under the leadership of the Central African Government and the auspices of Angola and Rwanda, in a strategic review meeting on the political process in Bangui on 4 June. She informed that the authorities had decided to establish a permanent platform for the strategic review to be convened on a quarterly basis and called for the Council's unanimous support in carrying out the plan for its monitoring. She suggested that the political commitments previously undertaken separately under the auspices of the Political Agreement guarantors and within the framework of the road map should be part of a single platform and bring together the representatives of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Angola and Rwanda, the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and MINUSCA. She urged the Government to expedite the implementation of the recommendations of the republican dialogue, which was one of the components of the road map. Expressing concern about the persistent violations of the ceasefire

¹⁶⁷ S/PV.9074.

by all the parties, she informed that MINUSCA had readjusted its concept of operations to prioritize a preventive approach centred on the civilian populations.

The President of the Network for Women's Leadership in the Central African Republic expressed major concerns regarding the sociopolitical, security, humanitarian and human rights situation in her country highlighing, inter alia, the killings targeting the populations of the hinterlands and atrocities committed by the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement as well as members of the national army, its allies and the regime militias. She regretted that, despite the participation of the civil society in the republican dialogue, the nature of the dialogue was non-inclusive. She urged the Council to consider the Central African Republic as a country in an emergency situation for which emergency measures must be taken.

On 19 October, the Special Representative expressed concern regarding the security situation and highlighted the need to critically assess the progress in the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate in four areas: political and security dynamics, safeguarding the Mission's achievements, the decentralization of the political and peace process, and the extension of state authority. She welcomed the implementation of the shared timetable of the Political Agreement and the joint road map and highlighted the developments that had already emerged in that regard, such as the opening of the President's dialogue with leaders of 11 armed groups. Concerning human rights violations, she informed about the establishment of a framework for constructive dialogue and accountability with regards to the follow-up of documented violations and the implementation of the recommendations made in the public reports of MINUSCA and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Throughout 2022, discussions in the Council focused mainly on the topics outlined above. With regards to the political process, Council members took note of the holding of the executive and follow-up committee meeting of the Political Agreement on 14 February, ¹⁶⁹ and the subsequent strategic review meeting held on 4 June by the Government of the Central African Republic, with the participation of regional actors, to monitor the implementation of the

¹⁶⁸ See <u>S/PV.9156</u>.

¹⁶⁹ See S/PV.8971.

road map. ¹⁷⁰ Council members stressed the need for the implementation of the road map and highlighted its critical importance in restoring peace and security in the country and returning to the commitments under the Political Agreement. ¹⁷¹ The representative of China expressed hope that the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region would enhance communication with the Government of the Central African Republic in the implementation of the road map and strive to form synergies based on the reality on the ground and its needs. ¹⁷² The representative of the Russian Federation underlined the importance for the authorities to commit to the principle of inclusivity when implementing the road map on actualizing the Political Agreement. Other Council members echoed similar sentiments, urging the process of the implementation of the road map to include women and other social groups. ¹⁷³

Concerning the republican dialogue initiated in March, Council members stressed the need for inclusivity, including ensuring the participation of women in the dialogue. The representative of Mexico welcomed the regional mobilization to facilitate the republican dialogue and revitalize the Political Agreement, particularly through the road map, and expressed belief that the region could play an important role in opening channels of communication with the groups linked to Coalition des patriotes pour le changement to bring them back to the negotiating table. The representative of France noted that some of the country's active forces had not been able to participate, emphasizing that only inclusive consultations and consensus surrounding the rules of the democratic process would enable the country to advance towards peace and reconciliation. Council members emphasized the need for the implementation of the

¹⁷⁰ See S/PV.9074, China, United Arab Emirates, India, and Norway.

¹⁷¹ See <u>S/PV.8971</u>, France, United Arab Emirates and Brazil; <u>S/PV.9074</u>, France, Norway, Ireland, and Albania; and <u>S/PV.9156</u>, France, Albania, , Chin), Mexico, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, India, Russian Federation, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya).

¹⁷² See S/PV.8971.

¹⁷³ See <u>S/PV.9156</u>, France, Albania, Mexico, and United Arab Emirates.

¹⁷⁴ S/PV.8971, United Arab Emirates, Gabon, and Norway; S/PV.9074, France, Brazil, ,United Arab Emirates, India; S/PV.9156, Brazil, United States, United Arab Emirates, Norway, United Kingdom, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya)..

¹⁷⁵ See S/PV.9074.

recommendations resulting from the republican dialogue¹⁷⁶ and welcomed the establishment of the follow-up committee.¹⁷⁷

Throughout the year, Council members repeatedly expressed concerns regarding the persistent human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, ¹⁷⁸ including those committed by the national security forces and the Wagner Group. ¹⁷⁹ The representative of the United States recalled that the national defence forces and Wagner Group contractors, referred to as "other security personnel" in the report of the Secretary-General, ¹⁸⁰ had perpetrated over 40 per cent of all violations documented during the reporting period, which was why the United States found it hard to consider lifting the arms embargo. ¹⁸¹ In a similar vein, concerned by the alarming reports regarding the conduct of the Central African forces and the brutal methods applied by the Wagner Group and instilled upon the Central African partners, the representative of France stressed that any changes to the embargo must be considered against that backdrop. ¹⁸² Council members condemned the massacres allegedly committed by the Wagner Group against civilians in January in Aigbando. 183 The representative of Ireland pointed out that state agents were also responsible for 45 per cent of violations and abuses documented between June and October, which was unacceptable. 184 The representatives of Albania and Norway expressed regret that the unilateral ceasefire had not produced the expected results in terms of ending hostilities, and the representative of the United States called upon the authorities to immediately stand up and enforce a ceasefire monitoring mechanism. ¹⁸⁵ Council members further urged the Central African authorities to investigate the allegations of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law and bring those responsible for these acts to

¹⁷⁶ Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya) and Norway.

¹⁷⁷ See S/PV.9156, Brazil, India, and Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya).

¹⁷⁸ See <u>S/PV.8971</u>, Albania, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya), United Kingdom, and Ireland; <u>S/PV.9074</u>, Brazil; and <u>S/PV.9156</u> France, Albania, Norway, Ireland, United Kingdom.

¹⁷⁹ See <u>S/PV.8971</u>, Albania, Norway, and Ireland; and <u>S/PV.9074</u>, France, Norway, United States, Ireland, United Kingdom, and Albania. <u>S/PV.9156</u>, France, Albania, Ireland, United States, and Norway, United Kingdom.

¹⁸⁰ See S/2022/119.

¹⁸¹ See S/PV.8971.

¹⁸² See S/PV.9074.

¹⁸³ See S/PV.8971, France, Albania, and United States.

¹⁸⁴ See S/PV.9156.

¹⁸⁵ See S/PV.8971.

account, including through prosecution. ¹⁸⁶ The representative of Gabon stressed the need for the implementation of a national special investigation commission to shed light on serious crimes and violations of human rights and humanitarian law. ¹⁸⁷ The representative of the United States noted the initial steps taken by the special commission of inquiry, led by the Central African Republic's Minister of Justice, and the need to follow through on the investigations. Council members welcomed the start of public hearings of the Special Criminal Court. ¹⁸⁸

During the period under review, the Council adopted two resolutions under this item, one in relation to the mandate of MINUSCA and one concerning the sanctions measures on the Central African Republic. Neither of the two resolutions was adopted unanimously. With regard to the sanctions measures, by resolution 2648 (2022) adopted on 29 July, the Council renewed until 31 July 2023 the arms embargo, asset freeze and travel ban, ¹⁸⁹ and expanded the list of exemptions to the arms embargo. ¹⁹⁰ The Council further removed the requirement of advance notification to the Committee of the intention to acquire arms and related material exempted from the arms embargo by the resolution. ¹⁹¹ The Council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 31 August 2023 requesting it to provide to the Council a final report no later than 30 May 2023. ¹⁹² By the resolution, the Council further welcomed the strategic review meeting held in Bangui on 4 June 2022 on the operationalization of the roadmap adopted by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on 16 September 2021 to revitalize the implementation of the Political Agreement. ¹⁹³

¹⁸⁶ See <u>S/PV.8971</u>, Albania, Norway, United States, United Kingdom, and Ireland; and <u>S/PV.9074</u>, Norway, Ireland, and United Kingdom.

¹⁸⁷ See S/PV.8971.

¹⁸⁸ See <u>S/PV.8971</u>, France, Mexico, Albania; and <u>S/PV.9074</u>, Brazil, India, United States, Ireland, Mexico, and Albania; and <u>S/PV.9156</u> France, Ireland, Mexico, Brazil, and Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya).

¹⁸⁹ See resolution <u>2648 (2022)</u>, paras. 1, 3 and 4. For more information on the sanctions measures concerning the Central African Republic, see part VII, sect. III.

¹⁹⁰ See resolution <u>2648 (2022)</u>, paras. 1 (g) and (h).

¹⁹¹ See resolution <u>2648 (2022)</u>, paras. 1 (a)-(h).

¹⁹² See resolution <u>2648 (2022)</u>, paras. 6 and 7. For information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution <u>2127 (2013)</u> and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.

¹⁹³ See resolution <u>2648 (2022)</u>, third preambular paragraph.

Resolution <u>2648 (2022)</u> was adopted with ten votes in favour and five abstentions. ¹⁹⁴ Following the adoption, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad expressed satisfaction with the first significant step to be made with regard to the embargo on armed groups, but stressed that it remained to be seen how it could be applied to armed groups. ¹⁹⁵ She thanked States that had voiced their support for lifting the embargo completely, China and the Russian Federation for their call to take into account the realities on the ground as well as the three African members of the Council, and regretted that the resolution did not respond to her country's legitimate request for a total lifting of the embargo.

Explaining their delegations' abstentions, the representatives of China, Gabon, Kenya and the Russian Federation recalled the requests by the Central African Republic authorities and regional organizations, to lift the embargo which the resolution failed to do. The representative of China said that the resolution still contained a number of restrictive measures that could pose unnecessary obstacles to the defence capacity-building of the Government and that the embargo measures had become increasingly incompatible with the developments in the country. The representative of Kenya, recalling provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, expressed hope that the Council would listen to the voices of Central Africans and the relevant regional organizations and take the remaining step of removing the notification requirement as soon as possible. The representative of the Russian Federation said that the resolution did not respond fully to the task of stabilizing the situation in the Central African Republic. The representative of Ghana expressed gratitude for the efforts of France as the penholder in trying to accommodate the input of delegations for a responsible release of the levers on the embargo in a way that did not have an adverse impact on the stability of the country and its neighbours and noted that the resolution represented the best possible outcome given the prevailing circumstances.

Among the Council members who voted in favour, the representative of France said that the resolution made it even easier for the Central African Republic's armed forces to acquire all

¹⁹⁴ *For*: Albania, Brazil, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, and United States; *against*: none; *abstained*: China, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Russian Federation. See <u>S/PV.9105</u>.

¹⁹⁵ See <u>S/PV.9105</u>.

types of weapons and ammunition, sending a strong message to the authorities whose greater involvement was key to combating the proliferation of weapons in the country. The representative of Albania underscored that the resolution was the closest to a balanced approach. Recognizing the progress made by the authorities in meeting the benchmarks, he noted that the resolution's final formula kept the focus on the need to improve the ability of the country to safeguard its internal security and improve its compliance with the benchmarks. The representative of the United Kingdom stated that the embargo remained an important tool for supporting the maintenance of peace and stability in the country. The representative of the United States noted that the region was awash with guns, and it was time to halt that unfettered flow. With effective implementation, which meant a notification requirement, the arms embargo could help silence the guns. The representative of Brazil said that the resolution kept in place important mechanisms, such as the system of benchmarks and the work of the Panel of Experts, to help guide the country towards stabilization and durable peace, and addressed, though only partially, the assessments and claims of the authorities and regional organizations.

Concerning the mandate of MINUSCA, on 15 November, the Council adopted resolution 2659 (2022), extending the mandate of MINUSCA for a period of one year until 15 November 2023. 196 The Council reiterated that MINUSCA's mandate should be implemented based on a prioritization of tasks. 197 In that regard, the Council reiterated, with certain modifications, MINUSCA's four priority tasks, namely, the protection of civilians; the provision of good offices and support to the peace process, including the implementation the Political Agreement and the ceasefire; the facilitation of the creation of a secure environment for the delivery of humanitarian assistance; and the protection of United Nations personnel, installations, equipment and goods. 198 By the resolution, the Council also took note of the republican dialogue held in March, and called for further steps from all actors to implement the recommendations contained therein to resolve any arising issues and conclude the electoral process through the organization of local elections. 199 The Council welcomed the strategic review meeting convened on 4 June,

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¹⁹⁶ See resolution 2659 (2022), para. 29.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., para. 33.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., para. 35 (a)-(d). For more information on the mandate of MINUSCA, see part X, sect. I.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., seventeenth preambular paragraph.

noting the government's ongoing efforts and Prime Minister Moloua's leadership to coordinate the implementation of the Political Agreement through the road map.²⁰⁰

During the meeting at which the Council adopted resolution 2659 (2022), with three abstentions, 201 several Council members took the floor to explain their votes. Explaining her country's abstention, the representative of Gabon emphasized that the text of the resolution did not meet the aspirations of the Central African Republic. 202 She deplored the rejection during the negotiations of the proposals put forward by the three African members of the Council in support of a strong commitment to restoring State authority, which would undoubtedly help to build peace. She further regretted the lack of differentiated treatment of the armed groups and the Central African authorities, and the deletion of the well-defined deadline for the strategic review of MINUSCA. She emphasized that the resolution did not take into account the efforts made by the Central African armed forces in defending and securing their territory in difficult conditions. The representative of China emphasized that peacekeeping operations should define their priorities based on the needs of the host country. He regretted that the resolution did not reflect the fact that the Government continued to recover lost territory and did not take on board China's views on the security threat posed by armed groups, as well as the Mission's independent strategic review, which left China no other choice but to abstain in the voting. He hoped that the Mission's assistance in extending State authority in extending state authority would be prioritized. The representative of the Russian Federation underscored that his delegation could not accept a text that equated all parties and armed groups to one another, when it was well documented that the latter were responsible for the majority of the violations. He stressed that many points raised by the Russian Federation had not been included in the text, including the proposed wording on the need to effectively investigate the supply-chain used to deliver explosive devices and their components deployed to the country.

Among the Council members who voted in favour of the resolution, some expressed support for the inclusion of new language concerning MINUSCA's freedom of movement and

²⁰⁰ Ibid., twelfth preambular paragraph.

²⁰¹ For: Albania, Brazil, France, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States; *against*: none; *abstained*: China, Gabon, Russian Federation.

²⁰² See S/PV.9190.

the authorization of night flights.²⁰³ The representative of France deplored the abstentions and stressed the need for the Council's unanimous support for MINUSCA. The representative of the United States regretted that the issue of the "Kremlin-backed Wagner Group" was left out of the resolution and emphasized that the forces sent by the Russian Federation to the Central African Republic had consistently obstructed MINUSCA's ability to fulfil its mandate. The representative of the United Kingdom was disappointed by the loss of agreed responsibility-to-protect language, stressing that the Government remained primarily responsible for the protection of civilians. The representatives of Kenya and Ghana regretted that some of the proposals presented by the three African members of the Council, including promoting the extension of state authority, the deployment of security forces and the preservation of territorial integrity from "other tasks" to "priority tasks", had been left out. Kenya also hoped for stronger language condemning the activities of armed groups and regretted that manifest geopolitical considerations had dictated the positions of certain delegations during the negotiation process.

Meetings: The situation in the Central African Republic

Meeting and date	Sub-item	Other documents	Rule 37 invitations	Rule 39 and other invitations	Speakers	Decisions and vote (for-against- abstaining)
S/PV.8971 22 February 2022	Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2022/119)		Central African Republic	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic, Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region	members ^a all invitees ^b	

²⁰³ Ibid., France, United States and United Kingdom.

<u>S/PV.9074</u> 22 June 2022	Letter dated 1 June 2022 2 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/449) Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2022/491)		Central African Republic	Special Representative of the Secretary General, President of the Network for Women's Leadership in the Central African Republic	13 Council members ^a all invitees	
<u>S/PV.9105</u> 29 July 2022	Letter dated 14 June 2022 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/489) Letter dated 29 June 2022 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2588 (2021) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2022/527)	resolution submitted by France (S/2022/579)	Central African Republic		13 Council members ^c , invitee ^d	Resolution 2648 (2022) 10-0-5° (adopted under Chapter VII)
S/PV.9156 19 October 2022	Report of the Secretary- General on the Central African Republic (<u>S/2022/762</u>)		Central African Republic, Rwanda	Special Representative of the Secretary- General	13 Council members ^a , all invitees ^d	
S/PV.9190 14 November 2022		Draft resolution submitted by France (S/2022/845)	Central African Republic		11 Council members ^f , invitee ^b	Resolution <u>2659</u> (2022) 12-0-3 ^g (adopted under Chapter VII)

^a Albania, Brazil, China, France, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Kenya), India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^b Central African Republic was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad. The African Union Special Representative and Head of the African Union Office in the Central African Republic participated in the meeting via videoconference from Bangui. The Executive Secretary of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region participated in the meeting via videoconference from Kinshasa.

^c Albania, Brazil, China, France, Gabon, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Norway, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

^d Central African Republic was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad.

^e For: Albania, Brazil, France, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America; against: none; abstained: China, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Russian Federation.

^f Albania, China, France, Gabon, Ghana, Ireland, Kenya, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States. ^gFor: Albania, Brazil, France, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America; *against*: none; *abstained*: China, Gabon, Russian Federation.