

Africa

1. The situation concerning Western Sahara

During the period under review, the Security Council held one meeting and adopted one resolution in connection with the situation concerning Western Sahara. In that meeting, the Council adopted resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#).¹ In addition, Council members held one private meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#).² More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below. Council members also held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.³

On 27 October, further to the report of the Secretary-General,⁴ the Council adopted resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), extending the mandate of MINURSO for a period of one year, until 31 October 2023.⁵ The draft resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour and two abstentions.⁶ In the resolution, the Council expressed its full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy to facilitate the negotiations process in order to achieve a solution to the Western Sahara question, building on the progress and framework of the former Personal Envoy.⁷ The Council noted with deep concern the breakdown of the ceasefire, and, in that regard, called upon the parties to comply fully with the military agreements reached with MINURSO.⁸ The Council also 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

¹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II.

² The private meeting was held on 10 October 2022 in connection with 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 [A/77/2](#), part II, chap. 21.

³ See [A/77/2](#), part II, chap. 3.

⁴ See [S/2022/733](#). See also letter dated 17 October 2022 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council ([S/2022/797](#)).

⁵ Resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), para. 1. For further information on the mandate of MINURSO, see part X, sect. I.

⁶ See [S/PV.9168](#).

⁷ Resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), para. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, thirteenth preambular paragraph and para. 6.

political solution, which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.⁹ The Council also noted with deep concern the continued hardships faced by Sahrawi refugees, their dependency on external humanitarian assistance, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the insufficient funding for those living in Tindouf refugee camps and the risks associated with the reduction of food assistance.¹⁰

Following the adoption of the resolution, several Council members took the floor to explain their votes. Among those abstaining, the representative of Kenya regretted that resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#) continued a gradual but noticeable shift away from the mandate of MINURSO which would not assist the parties in achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, as originally intended.¹¹ He further regretted that the proposals Kenya had made during the negotiations had not been taken on board and expressed his concern that the adopted resolution did not substantively reflect the Council's commitment - as reflected in resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#) and in previous resolutions, to "provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect".¹² He further observed that the African Union, which counted both parties as its members, should not be ignored by any United Nations process, if only based on adherence to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. He said that the Personal Envoy should make every effort to cooperate with the African Union to find ways to bring all parties to a common position protective of peace, security and the holding of the agreed referendum. The representative of the Russian Federation echoed the Kenya representative stating that the process of preparing and agreeing on the adopted resolution had not been fully consultative, adding that a number of useful proposals by other Council members had also gone unheeded and that as a result, the resolution was not balanced.¹³ He also pointed out that in the past few years, the resolutions on the renewal of the mandate of MINURSO had included amendments that harmed

⁹ Ibid., para. 4.

¹⁰ Ibid., twenty-second preambular paragraph.

¹¹ See [S/PV.9168](#).

¹² See resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#), seventh preambular paragraph. Resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#) made reference to the language quoted in its sixth preambular paragraph and in para. 4.

¹³ See [S/PV.9168](#).

the unbiased and impartial approach needed to resolve the issue of Western Sahara. He added that resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#) did not reflect the real situation on the ground and was unlikely to facilitate the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to resume the direct negotiation process between Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution. He questioned the vague language used to define the direct participants in the conflict and the Western Sahara peace process. He also considered the numerous references to the round-table format to be misplaced. He deemed those references irrelevant and limiting the mediation activities of the Personal Envoy. He added that the text of the resolution did not reflect the continuing issue of access by United Nations entities to the territory of Western Sahara in order to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population there. In concluding, the Russian representative underscored that their position with respect to the voting was due solely to their disagreement with the wording of the resolution and rather reflected the assessment of the work of the penholder, while reiterating Russia's consistent support for MINURSO and its Head and for the key stabilizing role it played creating favourable conditions on the ground for the resumption of dialogue between the parties in order to advance the peace process.

Among the delegations voting in favour, the representative of the United States regretted that the Council had not been unanimous in support of renewing the mandate of MINURSO, as unity greatly enhanced United Nations efforts to achieve peace. He called on all concerned to engage with the Personal Envoy in good faith, adding that a political solution was vital to promoting a peaceful and prosperous future for the people of Western Sahara and the region. He further stated that they continued to view Morocco's autonomy plan as serious, credible and realistic, and one potential approach to satisfying those aspirations. The representative of China expressed the hope that future Council resolutions on the extension of the mandate of MINURSO could reflect the latest changes in the situation, based on in-depth consultations, so as to arrive at a text that was acceptable to the relevant parties and that consensus could be achieved at an early date on the next steps in the political process of the question of Western Sahara. The representative of Brazil noted that notwithstanding its many virtues, the text could have greatly benefited from a more balanced approach with regard to some of its innovative propositions, which could have proven useful in bridging some of the gaps seen during negotiations. The

representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Gabon expressed their support for Morocco's autonomy plan, which presented credible prospects that allowed for a solution in line with the Charter, as a way out of the current impasse but also for a mutually acceptable political solution to be reached.

Meetings: The situation concerning Western Sahara

<i>Meeting 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.9168 27 October 2022	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2022/733)	Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2022/801)			Seven Council members ^a	Resolution 2654 (2022) (13-0-2) ^b

^a China, Brazil, Gabon, Kenya, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates and United States.

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