

9. Peace and security in Africa

During the period under review, the Security Council held seven meetings in connection with the item entitled “Peace and security in Africa” and issued two presidential statements. Six of the meetings took the form of briefings while one was held for the purpose of the adoption of a decision.³¹⁰ More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in table 1 below. Council members also held 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 videoconferences, the Council held informal consultations of the whole and closed videoconferences in connection with this item.³¹¹

In 2021, Council members held one open videoconference and a meeting focusing on the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel. Council members also held a high-level open videoconference to discuss the topic of addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa which resulted in the issuance of a presidential statement. In addition, the Council held four open meetings relating to the Tigray region in Ethiopia and two other meetings on the situation regarding the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, in connection to which a presidential statement was issued. Further details are provided below.

In relation to the Joint Force of the Group of Five, Council members heard briefings in May and November 2021³¹², further to the reports of the Secretary-General.³¹³ On 18 May 2021, Council members held an open videoconference at which they heard briefings by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, the Commander of the Joint Force of the Group of Five and the Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.³¹⁴ In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations took stock of the support that the international community, and more particularly the United

³¹⁰ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II. A.

³¹¹ See [A/76/2](#), part II, chap. 35. In 2021, informal consultations of the Council were also held in the form of closed videoconferences. For more details on the procedures developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II of this Supplement as well as *Repertoire, Supplement 2020*, part II.

³¹² See [S/2021/484](#) and [S/PV.8903](#).

³¹³ See [S/2021/442](#) and [S/2021/940](#).

³¹⁴ See [S/2021/484](#).

Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), had provided over the previous months to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel as it continued to scale up its operational tempo in an ever-more challenging security environment. In this regard, he said that since the Pau Summit in January 2020, the improved coordination among national armies, Operation Barkhane, the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and MINUSMA, as well as the deployment of Task Force Takuba had enabled results to be achieved in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel region. The Under-Secretary-General also said that there was a need to be aware of the dire consequences of the security situation for the population, as well as the risks for the rest of West Africa if the situation in the Sahel was not properly addressed. He underlined that the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel remained a vital part of security responses to address extremist armed groups in the region and reiterated the need for its more predictable funding.

In his briefing, the Commander of the Joint Force spoke about the genesis and organization of the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel; its work and recent progress; and the road ahead and outstanding challenges. Specifically on its logistical and financial support model, he described the complex support system by the countries integrating the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the United Nations, the European Union and the Operation Barkhane, adding that its sustainability remained fragile. He suggested that the most sustainable solution for a sustainable system of funding would be to establish a United Nations support office, funded by assessed and voluntary contributions, to provide to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel with logistical, operational, tactical and strategic support. He reminded the Council of the need to redouble efforts to mobilize material and financial resources, in accordance with the commitments made by the international community, towards the eventual establishment of a more permanent support.

Acknowledging the complexity of the situation in the Sahel, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission underlined in his statement that more needed to be done to address the root causes of conflicts in the Sahel through a long-term, comprehensive and integrated approach to sustaining peace and development. He informed of the Peacebuilding Commission's meeting on 28 April to discuss peace and development trends in the Sahel and elaborated on the

Commission's work in the region. With regard to the 28 April meeting, he reported that the Peacebuilding Commission had recognized the budgetary burden caused by increased security expenditures and reduced revenue collection in several countries, at a time when the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic was constraining resources and called for greater coordination among the security, development and humanitarian actors in the region in order to ensure that effective efforts were made to meet programming and resource mobilization needs. The Peacebuilding Commission also recognized that the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel remained a useful framework for ensuring proactive and effective United Nations activities in the Sahel to help tackle the root causes and drivers of instability and violence in the region and welcomed the continued support from the Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund for cross-border investments and empowering women and youth.

During the discussion, Council members commended the role of the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States in coordinating and mobilizing operational and strategic support for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.³¹⁵ The representative of Estonia sustained that regional and national ownership of counter-terrorism efforts was crucial to their success. Several Council members were supportive of the consideration and establishment of a United Nations support office dedicated to providing logistical and operational support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.³¹⁶ According to the representative of Chad, the support office would enable it to definitively resolve the issue of sustainable, predictable funding so that it could focus its full attention on the fight against terrorism in order to restore security, stability and peace and create the conditions for much-needed sustainable socioeconomic development in the region. The representative of the United States stated that the then existing Group of Five for the Sahel Trust Fund and bilateral support to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel were the right approach to addressing the Sahel's security concerns and in order to make that work, all partners had to honour their pledges to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel and support the individual Group of Five for the Sahel militaries that supplied troops to the regional force.

³¹⁵ Estonia, India, Niger, also on behalf of Kenya, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Viet Nam.

³¹⁶ India, Niger, also on behalf of Kenya, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Russian Federation and Viet Nam.

On 12 November 2021, the Council held a meeting, at which it heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations and the President of the Burkina Faso chapter of the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the Economic Community of West African States Space.³¹⁷ In his briefing, the Under-Secretary-General reported that the situation in the region had remained extremely volatile and noted that the armed and security forces of the member States of the Group of Five for the Sahel were meeting this threat with determination and courage. He said that the important decision of the Group of Five for the Sahel member States to take in hand their security challenges by creating the counter-terrorist Joint Force was a significant accomplishment but that, as noted by the Secretary-General in the assessment report of support for the regional force,³¹⁸ it continued to face significant challenges. With reference to the assessment report as well as the latest report,³¹⁹ he recalled that the Joint Force of the Group of Five remained a vital part of a collective security response to the multiple challenges that the region faced. Noting that that the support model of the Joint Force of the Group of Five was unpredictable and could not meet all of its needs, he expressed the conviction that only a dedicated support office, funded through assessed contributions, could provide the support that it needed and that would enable the regional force to become more effective and enhance the scope and reach of its work. While acknowledging that many donors and partners provided bilateral support to the Group of Five for the Sahel member States, in the light of the serious crisis unfolding in the region, a comprehensive and collective approach was needed to support a collective security initiative.

Speaking on behalf of the Group of Five for the Sahel, the representative of Chad provided a statement elaborating on the worrisome security situation affecting the region, including terrorism, and the return of mercenaries and foreign fighters that were expelled from Libya, and affirmed that the Group of Five for the Sahel was a unique, relevant and beneficial initiative, emanating from the States concerned. She said that it remained the only framework for action capable of providing the most appropriate solutions to the challenges that the subregion faced and added that with adequate resources commensurate with those serious challenges, the

³¹⁷ See [S/PV.8903](#).

³¹⁸ See [S/2021/850](#).

³¹⁹ See [S/2021/940](#).

Group of Five for the Sahel had the capacity to eradicate the terrorist threat and bring about security and well-being for its people, to the benefit of the entire region and the world. With regard to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, she reiterated the call to the Council to create a support office to provide it with sustainable, predictable and reliable funding.

The President of the Burkina Faso chapter of the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the Economic Community of West African States Space noted that the security crisis that prevailed in the region had exacerbated the significant gender inequality that already existed, underpinned by several sociocultural beliefs and barriers that were deeply rooted in tradition. She reported on the situation of women in the region as well as on the initiatives by women to come together across platforms and networks at the regional level. To address the situation of women, she brought to the attention of the Council some recommendations. First, substantial technical and financial support for the development, dissemination, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of national strategies and action plans for the implementation of the resolutions for women and young people. Secondly, substantial technical, material and financial support for women's and young people's civil society organizations to implement long-term, positive impact projects and ensure effective and sustainable socioeconomic and political empowerment for women and girls. Thirdly, efforts to initiate, encourage, motivate and facilitate dialogue between armed movements and State and regional authorities in order to silence the weapons in the Sahel region. Fourthly, substantial technical, material and financial support to ensure quality education and health for all in the Sahel states. And lastly, substantial technical and financial support for conflict prevention actions in the Group of Five for the Sahel region.

During the discussion, several Council members supported the proposals of the Secretary-General to establish a United Nations support office for the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel.³²⁰ By contrast, the representatives of the United Kingdom and the United States objected to the United Nations becoming a vehicle to provide support to the regional force expressing concern at its involvement in offensive counter-terrorism operations.³²¹ The representative of the Russian Federation expressed her country's readiness to hold a substantive

³²⁰ See [S/PV.8903](#), France, Niger, also on behalf of Kenya, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Norway, and Estonia.

³²¹ United Kingdom and United States.

discussion on the proposals in the October letter of the Secretary-General regarding increased assistance to the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel through the United Nations. She added that both options, either the creation of a small advisory office at the Joint Force of the Group of Five secretariat or the creation of a full-fledged support office, required a clear understanding of their timing and feasibility, effectiveness, the costs involved and the sources of funding. Council members also addressed the Council recent mission to the Niger and Mali.³²²

On 19 May 2021, at the initiative of China which held the presidency for the month,³²³ Council members held a high-level open videoconference focused on addressing root causes of conflict while promoting post-pandemic recovery in Africa. At the videoconference, Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme.³²⁴ In his briefing, the Secretary-General said that one year into the COVID-19 pandemic, it was clear that the crisis was feeding many of the drivers of conflict and instability and underlined that its severe impact on young people, especially in Africa, was contributing to increased risks which could be exploited by criminals and extremists. He noted that the pandemic had also continued to deepen existing gender inequalities and threatened the hard-won gains in terms of women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all areas of social, economic and political life. Nonetheless, the Secretary-General stated that recovery from the pandemic also offered an opportunity to address the root causes of conflict, implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Agenda 2063 of the African Union. He noted that equitable and sustainable vaccine roll-out worldwide was the quickest path towards a fast and fair recovery, and that the United Nations was advocating everywhere for a coordinated global effort on vaccines and for measures to alleviate the debt burden that threatened to cripple the recovery in many low- and middle-income developing countries, particularly in Africa.

In his remarks, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission said that slowed economic growth, lower levels of international trade, lower demand for Africa's primary exports,

³²² France, Niger, also on behalf of Kenya, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, India, Norway, United Kingdom, Ireland, China, United States and Mexico.

³²³ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 2 May 2021 ([S/2021/420](#)).

³²⁴ See [S/2021/490](#).

rising external debt and rising inflation had created an economic situation that would impact negatively on the socioeconomic situation in many African countries, and that 20 African countries faced the risk of collapse because of the burden of debt. He emphasized the urgent need to put an end to vaccine protectionism and vaccine nationalism that threatened to exclude low-income and fragile countries and thereby endangering the socioeconomic recovery of affected African countries. The Chairperson also emphasized the need not to lose the momentum gained before the COVID-19 pandemic on the nexus between peace, security and development as expressed in Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which had clearly articulated long-term goals, and encouraged the Council to consider a new approach and innovative ways to fund peace in Africa, as other organs and institutions in international fields were focusing on funding African development.

In his statement, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) noted that peace, security and development were intricately linked in Africa and that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2063 of the African Union would require overcoming complex legacy issues and the challenges that compounded them, among them political instability, weak governance institutions, burgeoning inequalities, a rollback on human rights, the climate emergency and the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that building forward better would require local and global actors across the closely integrated disciplines of humanitarian response, development and peace to work together to address the root causes of conflict. In this regard, he focused on three critical questions. First, on the next steps regarding vaccine equity, fiscal space and the socioeconomic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondly, on the opportunities around the green economy for countries and regions most affected by conflict to build forward better for people and the planet. Thirdly, on the initiatives to support State capacity, heal communities and create an inclusive future, especially for women and girls.

Following the briefings, some speakers recognized that the COVID-19 pandemic had disrupted the progress of the Sustainable Development Goals,³²⁵ others focused on the increase

³²⁵ Canada, also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, Ethiopia, Slovakia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

in the number of people that lived in poverty,³²⁶ and worsened inequality.³²⁷ To support Africa's development and recovery from the pandemic, several speakers underscored the need for debt relief,³²⁸ the need to implement Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union,³²⁹ and also expressed support for the African Continental Free Trade Area.³³⁰ Most speakers also emphasized the need for equitable vaccine access and supported the role of the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility. Several speakers emphasized the need to strengthen Africa's public health system to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic and future health crises.³³¹ In addition, some speakers recognized that the Peacebuilding Commission could play a role in supporting the recovery from the pandemic.³³² In that regard, the representative of South Africa said that the United Nations, through its bodies such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Council, should harmonize its engagement with the African Union and regional economic communities/regional mechanisms on recovery and reconstruction efforts as determined by the concerned countries, which would also reduce any overlapping and duplication of effort on the ground. Recognizing that the pandemic had had a greater impact on women and girls, several speakers emphasized the need to place them at the heart of the COVID-19 pandemic response and recovery.³³³ In addition, several speakers noted that the pandemic had exacerbated the root causes of conflicts.³³⁴ In this regard, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Migration and Tunisians Abroad of Tunisia noted the need for a Council approach to international security that took into consideration the COVID-19 pandemic. The representative of Hungary affirmed that the pandemic had not only created new threats to global peace and security, but also unique opportunities to improve the prospects for future cooperation.

³²⁶ France, European Union, Pakistan, Portugal and Zimbabwe.

³²⁷ France, Ireland, Norway, Belgium, Canada, also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, Denmark on behalf of the Nordic countries, European Union, Japan, Pakistan, Portugal and Zimbabwe.

³²⁸ China, Tunisia, Estonia, Kenya, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, European Union, Pakistan, Rwanda and South Africa.

³²⁹ China, Viet Nam, Denmark, on behalf of the Nordic countries, Portugal, Qatar, Romania and Spain.

³³⁰ China, Ireland and Canada, also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand.

³³¹ China, Viet Nam, Ireland, Kenya, Denmark, on behalf of the Nordic countries, European Union, Italy, Japan, Peru and Qatar.

³³² Canada, also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, Peru, Republic of Korea and South Africa.

³³³ Viet Nam, Ireland, Niger, Denmark and Peacebuilding Commission.

³³⁴ Estonia, Kenya, Norway, Ethiopia, European Union, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, United Arab Emirates and Zimbabwe.

On 19 May 2021, the Council issued a presidential statement which was announced at the end of the videoconference.³³⁵ In the presidential statement, the Council expressed grave concern about the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which had caused severe socioeconomic, political humanitarian and security repercussions, and had further exacerbated existing conflict drivers in Africa.³³⁶ The Council stressed the need for greater support to African countries, especially conflict-affected countries, and regional and subregional organizations, in order to recover from the pandemic and build back better in a more just, equal, and equitable and inclusive manner, including through providing necessary medical supplies, including safe and efficacious tests, treatments and vaccines and supporting African countries in strengthening their health systems.³³⁷ The Council also welcomed the important role of the Peacebuilding Commission, and emphasized the need to integrate peacebuilding and sustaining peace into efforts to build back better in Africa.³³⁸

On 8 July 2021, the Council held a meeting to discuss issues related to the construction of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam by Ethiopia. At the meeting, the Council heard briefings by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa and the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme.³³⁹ The representatives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan were invited to participate in this meeting under rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure.³⁴⁰

In his remarks, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General stated that although Egypt, Ethiopia, the Sudan had acknowledged that most aspects related to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam had been addressed, they still had to agree on some core issues, that included a dispute-resolution mechanism and on drought mitigation, particularly the filling and operation of the dam in drought years. He also said that the League of Arab States had, on 15 June 2021, adopted a resolution on the dispute that called on Ethiopia to refrain from filling the reservoir

³³⁵ See [S/PRST/2021/10](#). For further information on the procedures for the adoption of decisions during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II. See also *Repertoire, Supplement 2020*, part II.

³³⁶ See [S/PRST/2021/10](#), second paragraph.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, fourth paragraph.

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, twenty-fifth paragraph.

³³⁹ See [S/PV.8816](#).

³⁴⁰ See [S/PV.8816](#).

without reaching an agreement and also called on the Council to hold consultations on the matter. Ethiopia had objected to the communique, which it saw as an attempt to politicize and internationalize the dispute, and instead stressed its commitment to the African Union mediation. The Special Envoy requested all parties to remain engaged and to avoid making any pronouncements that would increase tensions in a region that was already subject to a series of challenges.

In her statement, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme noted that the Governments of Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan had over the years made sustainable efforts to enhance their cooperation relating to their transboundary water resources, highlighting in that regard the 2015 declaration of principles, in which they committed to some core principles, including, inter alia, cooperation, equitable and reasonable utilization, preventing the cause of significant harm and peaceful settlement of disputes. She added that consensus had not been reached regarding some critical aspects that included arrangements for the management of protracted drought, development upstream and downstream of the dam, and a dispute-resolution mechanism, whereas some differences also remained regarding the scope and nature of the proposed agreement. The Executive Director also underlined that effective and cooperative water management was even more important in the context of climate change. In this connection, she noted that climate models indicated that the flow of the Nile would exhibit increasing variability up to 2040, leading to more floods and more intense droughts.

Speaking on behalf of the Chairperson of the African Union, the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo informed that there had been several positive developments, especially in the form of the draft agreement put together by the parties with the assistance of African Union experts. The proposals put forward indicated that 90 per cent of the technical problems had already been resolved. The issues remaining for the parties to settle their outstanding technical and legal differences, included the nature of the agreement, the dispute-resolution mechanism and the waterflow management during periods of drought. In this regard, the representative said that the Council, whose primary role in resolving international disputes was indisputable, needed to support the African Union and assist the facilitator in the quest for peace in that volatile area of the Horn of Africa.

Following the briefings, Council members encouraged the parties to avoid taking any action that could undermine negotiations and expressed support to the process led by the African Union.³⁴¹ The representative of India said that transboundary-water disputes should ideally be resolved through mechanisms agreed upon by the primary stakeholders and advised the countries concerned to continue their bilateral engagements and to cooperate fully in a focused manner with the African Union, to reach a mutually acceptable, long-term solution to the relevant issues.³⁴² The representatives of Mexico and France made reference to the actual and potential exacerbating effect of the dispute on the existing tensions in the region. In this regard, they emphasized the need to adopt a preventive approach and avoid the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam becoming a threat to the maintenance of international peace and security. The representatives of the Niger and Mexico shared their experience of managing transboundary water resources. In that regard, the representative of the Niger said that the successful example of the management of the waters of the Niger River by any State under the authority of the Niger Basin Authority could effectively serve as a source of inspiration for an accelerated solution to the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam issue. Similarly, the representative of Mexico offered the examples of the institutions that were devoted to implementing boundary and water treaties between Mexico and the United States and between Mexico, Belize and Guatemala, as a model in future rounds of negotiations among Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan. The representative of the Russian Federation proposed that since all the interested parties were gathered in New York for the meeting, they could hold a round of negotiations, brokered by the presidency of the African Union, to resolve the differences over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. He also confirmed his country's readiness to provide satellite monitoring of the filling of the reservoir in the event of a request from all participants in the trilateral negotiations. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt noted that despite the tireless efforts of the Chairpersons of the African Union and the international partners, the parties were again confronted by the reality of the unilateral execution of the filling of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam without an agreement to protect downstream communities against the dangers of this dam. While expressing the hope to conclude

³⁴¹ See part V, sect I. of this Supplement for further discussions.

³⁴² See [S/PV/8816](#).

a legally binding agreement that enabled Ethiopia to achieve its developmental objectives by generating hydropower expeditiously, efficiently and sustainably, he said that any agreement needed to be equitable, reasonable and legally binding and it needed to include provisions to mitigate the adverse effects of the dam. The Minister explained that Egypt had come to the Council in search of a viable path towards a peaceful, amicable and negotiated solution to this crisis and to avert the dire consequences of the parties' inability to reach a settlement to the matter. He expressed the expectation for the Council to take the necessary measures to ensure that the parties engaged in an effective process of negotiations that could yield an agreement that served the parties' collective interests. The Minister further called upon the Council to adopt a draft resolution on the question that had been circulated by Tunisia, which would have reaffirmed the Council's resolve to upholding its responsibility to maintain international peace and security and would send an unequivocal signal of reassurance that it remained committed to the peace and prosperity of the African continent. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Sudan noted the benefits of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam for the Sudan in terms of flood prevention and regular flow throughout the year. Those benefits would materialize if the dam was filled and operated in such a way that the Sudan was aware of how it was filled and operated. He indicated further that his country could not accept that the filling and operating methods for the dam, adopted unilaterally, could be used to terrorize communities of millions of Sudanese that relied mainly on river agriculture, undermine their dignity and violate their human rights. Cautioning against the Council's silence, the Minister expressed hope that it would assume its responsibilities in maintaining regional peace and security in a preventative way by strengthening the negotiations under the auspices of the African Union while allowing international mediators and observers to assume their role so as to facilitate the negotiations and reach an agreement in accordance with a set time frame and to call on Ethiopia to abstain from any unilateral measure without prior agreement, which could pose a threat to millions of inhabitants behind the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. The Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy of Ethiopia expressed the belief that it was an unfitting use of the time and resources of the Council to discuss the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam. He affirmed that for the first time since its establishment, the Council was being asked to pronounce itself on a water development

project. Noting that the Council was a political and security organ, the Minister said that it was unhelpful and misguided to present to this global security body an issue that required a hydrotechnical solution and requested the Council to make the meeting the last of its deliberations on the subject, underscoring that there was no subject matter as far from the mandate of the Council as this one.

On 15 September 2021, the Council issued a presidential statement on the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam.³⁴³ In the statement, the Council encouraged Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sudan to resume negotiations at the invitation of the Chairperson of the African Union to finalize expeditiously the text of mutually acceptable and binding agreement on the filling and operation of the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, within a reasonable time frame.³⁴⁴ The Council also underscored that the statement did not set out any principles or precedent in any other transboundary water disputes.³⁴⁵

Speaking after the issuance of the presidential statement, the representative of India explained that as an upper, middle and lower riparian State, with several rivers entering and exiting its land, any discussion on matters relating to such issues in the Council were of direct interest and importance to India.³⁴⁶ He stated in this regard that his country's principled position, as a general rule, was that transboundary water issues did not belong to the domain of the Council. In that regard, it was important to place on record that the presidential statement did not set out any principles or precedent for the Council to intervene or adjudicate in any other transboundary water disputes.

Concerning the situation in the northern region of Tigray in Ethiopia, the Council heard briefings twice by both the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, and once by both the acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator and the High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa.³⁴⁷

³⁴³ See [S/PRST/2021/18](#).

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, fourth paragraph.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, last paragraph.

³⁴⁶ See [S/PV.8860](#).

³⁴⁷ See [S/PV.8812](#), [S/PV.8843](#), [S/PV.8875](#) and [S/PV.8899](#)

At a meeting held on 2 July 2021, the Council heard a briefing by the Under-Secretary-General said that after almost eight months of conflict, the Government of Ethiopia had on 28 June 2021 announced a unilateral ceasefire in Tigray, citing the need to address the humanitarian crisis in the region, but the Tigray Defence Forces were yet to agree to it.³⁴⁸ She stated that a ceasefire observed by all parties would have facilitated the provision of humanitarian aid and would have been a starting point for necessary political efforts to chart a way of the crisis. The Under-Secretary-General also noted that the conflict in Tigray was a result of deep-rooted political grievances that could only be resolved through dialogue and a credible political process and welcomed the promise by the Government of Ethiopia to take steps to hold an all-inclusive dialogue process, which could be part of a broader effort to address Ethiopia's structural challenges, encourage reconciliation and foster consensus on the way forward for the country's transition.

In his statement, the Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator stated that the humanitarian situation in Tigray was more alarming, than when he had last briefed the Council on 15 June 2021,³⁴⁹ with two million people that were still displaced and close to 5.2 million people that still required humanitarian assistance.³⁵⁰ He also said that more than 1,200 cases of serious sexual and gender-based violence had been reported and more continued to emerge, whereas 12 humanitarian workers had been killed since the start of the conflict. Despite the challenges, humanitarian actors continued to work to reach people in desperate need. The Acting Under-Secretary-General urged all groups to stop fighting to allow humanitarian aid to get through unimpeded and to protect civilians.

³⁴⁸ See [S/PV.8812](#). Prior to this meeting, on 22 April, the Council issued a statement to the press on Ethiopia, noting with concern the humanitarian situation in the Tigray region. For more information, see [S/2021/1084](#), (for the press statement, see [SC/14501](#)).

³⁴⁹ On 15 June 2021, the Council held an informal interactive dialogue on the humanitarian situation in the Tigray region of Ethiopia, see [S/2021/1032](#). For further information on informal interactive dialogues, see part II.

³⁵⁰ See [S/PV.8812](#).

In the statements after the briefings, several Council members called for the withdrawal of Eritrean forces from Tigray and Ethiopia.³⁵¹ The representative of Norway also noted that their continued presence was a threat to regional peace and security.³⁵² Some Council members recognized that the Council could help end the conflict and achieve peace.³⁵³ The representative of China noted that when dealing with the issue, the Council needed to carefully and prudently calibrate the timing and approach taken to ensure that whatever action it took contributed to improving the situation in Tigray, rather than having the opposite effect. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed regret about the format of the meeting and cautioned against using it to further destabilize an already complex situation in Tigray and weaken the political position of the federal authorities, and further emphasized that the situation in Tigray needed to remain an internal affair of Ethiopia and that interference by the Council would be counterproductive. Further, the representative of Estonia noted that it was clear that the conflict in Tigray constituted a threat to international peace and security, which is why it was vital that the issue remained a priority on the Council's agenda. The representative of Ethiopia questioned the rationale of calling the open meeting and implored the Council to act with full awareness of the external challenges that Ethiopia was facing.

At a subsequent meeting held on 26 August 2021 on the same issue, who noted that the military confrontation, which had started 10 months earlier in the northern region of Tigray, was spreading, and the level of suffering was growing, with serious political, economic and humanitarian implications for Ethiopia and the broader region.³⁵⁴ He said that all the parties needed to recognize that there was no military solution and expressed the belief that there was an opportunity to address the conflict peacefully, which the parties needed to seize, in the interest of Ethiopia. The Secretary-General emphasized the need to create the conditions for the start of an inclusive national political dialogue in order to address the underlying causes of the conflict and to ensure that Ethiopian voices directed the pathway to peace. He said that the United Nations

³⁵¹ United States, United Kingdom, Kenya (also on behalf of Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Mexico, Estonia, India, Norway and France.

³⁵² For further information on the discussion of the Council regarding threats to international peace and security, see part VII, sect. I.

³⁵³ See [S/PV.8812](#), United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Mexico and Viet Nam.

³⁵⁴ See [S/PV.8843](#).

was ready to cooperate with the African Union and other key partners to support such a dialogue and emphasized that the attention and unity of the Council would be critical in the period ahead.

Following the Secretary-General's briefing, some Council members stated that the conflict in Tigray posed long-term consequences to the unity and stability of Ethiopia.³⁵⁵ Several Council members noted that the conflict also threatened the stability, peace and security of the Horn of Africa and the wider region.³⁵⁶ Most Council members expressed support to the efforts of the Secretary-General to end the conflict and welcomed the appointment of former President of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo, as the African Union High Representative for the Horn of Africa. Echoing the Secretary-General, many Council members emphasized that there was no military solution to the conflict and that a political settlement was necessary.³⁵⁷ In this regard, the representatives of India, Kenya, and the Russian Federation emphasized that the dialogue should be led by Ethiopians. Most Council members argued in addition that African regional and subregional organizations had a crucial role to play in finding a political solution to end the crisis.³⁵⁸ The representative of the United States expressed deep concern about the role of Eritrea in fuelling the then ongoing crisis, indicating that the presence of the Eritrean Defence Forces in Ethiopia remained a significant barrier to ceasefire negotiations and to a political resolution of the conflict. While noting that it was not possible to resolve the Tigray crisis through discussions in the Council, the representative of the Russian Federation said that it would be more effective if each Council member made its own contribution to resolving the situation, adding that the Russian Federation believed that emphasis needed to be placed on low-key diplomacy and bilateral channels of trust-based communication. The representative of United States stated instead that the trajectory of the conflict over the previous 10 months demanded continued Council action. Other Council members recalled the importance of upholding the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States.³⁵⁹ Several Council members denounced the limitations imposed to the entrance of humanitarian aid to the Tigray region and several of them

³⁵⁵ Ireland, United Kingdom and Viet Nam.

³⁵⁶ Ireland, Norway, United Kingdom, China, Mexico and India.

³⁵⁷ Ireland, Estonia, France, United Kingdom, United States, Viet Nam and Mexico.

³⁵⁸ Ireland, France, Norway, United Kingdom, Viet Nam, France, United States, China, Mexico, Kenya, also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

³⁵⁹ Viet Nam, China and Kenya, also on behalf of Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

also called for unfettered humanitarian access.³⁶⁰ Council members also welcomed and expressed support for the joint investigation by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission into alleged atrocities committed in Tigray.³⁶¹ The representative of Ethiopia stated that the state of affairs in his country did not transpire overnight, explaining that the genesis of the conflict dated back at least three decades. He asked for help to realize peace, including by putting pressure on the Tigray People's Liberation Front to stop its criminal advances, abandon preparations for combat and abide by the laws of the country. He added that the Tigray People's Liberation Front also needed to irrefutably delink itself from internal and external sponsors and affiliates. As for the international community, the representative of Ethiopia asked that it removed the actual or perceived support emanating from its side, off of which the Tigray People's Liberation Front was fed.

On 6 October 2021, the Council held a third meeting on the Tigray region. At the meeting, the Council heard another briefing by the Secretary-General who noted that up to seven million people in Tigray, Amhara and Afar were in need of food assistance and other emergency support.³⁶² In addition, an estimated 400,000 people in Tigray were living in famine-like conditions. He stated that while there was need to focus all efforts on saving lives and avoiding a massive human tragedy, the announcement by the Government of Ethiopia to expel eight senior United Nations officials, most of them humanitarian staff, was particularly disturbing and needed to be a matter of deep concern for all, as it related to the core of relations between the United Nations and Member States. The Secretary-General said that the United Nations would continue to play its mandated role and work with the Government of Ethiopia and with local and international partners to support millions of people that needed humanitarian assistance in Tigray, Amhara and Afar and across Ethiopia, in full accordance with the Charter and General Assembly resolution [46/182](#), and called on the Ethiopian authorities to allow the United Nations to do that without hindrance and to facilitate and enable its work with the urgency that the

³⁶⁰ Ireland, Estonia, France, Norway, United Kingdom, United States and Mexico.

³⁶¹ Ireland, Estonia, France, Norway, United Kingdom and Mexico.

³⁶² See [S/PV.8875](#).

situation demanded. He further appealed to all Council members to unify behind the efforts of the United Nations and its partners in Ethiopia.

Following the briefing of the Secretary-General, most Council members condemned or expressed regret at the decision of the Government of Ethiopia to expel eight key United Nations officials from the country.³⁶³ In that regard, the representative of Estonia said that the expulsion endangered the work of humanitarian aid workers in northern Ethiopia, where they already faced violence and harassment, while the representative of the United States noted that the expulsion was an affront to the Council, the United Nations and all Member States, as well as shared humanitarian principles. In addition, the representative of the United States expressed that if calls for humanitarian access continued to go unheard, the Council needed to consider all tools at its disposal, including a Council resolution, to save lives and promote international peace and security. The representative of the Russian Federation expressed that pressure that involved the Council and the threat regarding the adoption of resolutions were counterproductive. The representative of Ethiopia said that it was incomprehensible that the Council would be discussing a decision of a sovereign state and added that Ethiopia truly hoped that Council members would have had insight to leave the matter to the Government of Ethiopia and the United Nations. In addition to explaining the circumstances leading to the expulsion of eight United Nations staff members, he clarified that it was not Ethiopia's primary course of action adding that Ethiopia had on multiple occasions explained its concerns to United Nations officials. In that regard, the representative of Ethiopia explained that on 8 July 2021, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of Ethiopia had written a letter to the Secretariat explaining, in great detail, the misconduct by United Nations staff that required corrective measures. In response to the representative of Ethiopia, the Secretary-General took the floor for a second time.³⁶⁴ Acknowledging having had no knowledge of any written document provided by the Ethiopian Government to any United Nations entity concerning any of the eight United Nations staff members who were expelled, he asked the representative of Ethiopia that he be provided with a copy of that document so that he could investigate what had happened within the United Nations.

³⁶³ Estonia, France, Norway, United Kingdom, United States, China, India, Viet Nam, Mexico and Russian Federation.

³⁶⁴ For further information on participation, see part II of this Supplement, sect. VIII

On 8 November 2021, the Council held a fourth meeting on the Tigray region, at which it heard a briefing by the Under Secretary-General for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and the High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa.³⁶⁵ In her remarks, the Under Secretary-General for the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs noted that Tigrayan forces had in recent days advanced southwards towards Addis Ababa, in coordination with the Oromo Liberation Army, and that the Government of Ethiopia had declared a nationwide state of emergency. She said that the risk of Ethiopia descending into widening civil war was real, which would bring about a humanitarian catastrophe and consume the future of such an important country. The Under-Secretary-General also expressed that the report of the joint Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights-Ethiopian Human Rights Commission investigation into the conflict in Tigray, covering the period between November 2020 and June 2021, had concluded that there were reasonable grounds to believe that all parties to the conflict, including the National Defence Forces, the Eritrean Defence Forces, the Amhara Special Forces and allied militia, had committed violations of international human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, including attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, indiscriminate attacks that resulted in civilian casualties and extrajudicial killings, torture, arbitrary detentions, sexual and gender-based violence and forced displacement. He also said that the report underlined the steps that needed to be taken to ensure accountability for those acts.

In his statement, the High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa noted that since his arrival in Ethiopia, on 4 November 2021, he had met with both the Prime Minister and President of Ethiopia, as well as with the President of Oromia and Tigrayan leaders. Summarizing the discussions, he stated that all the leaders in Addis Ababa and in the north agreed individually that the differences between them were political and required a political solution through dialogue. The High Representative said that this constituted a window of opportunity that could collectively be tapped into to assist the people of Ethiopia to find a lasting solution to the ongoing crisis. He urged the Council to call on the international community to rally behind the African Union-led process in order to ensure

³⁶⁵ See [S/PV.8899](#).

coherence and unity of purpose in its peacekeeping efforts in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Ethiopia.

In the statements that followed, Council members referred to the Council press statement issued on 5 November 2021, which called for an immediate ceasefire and the commencement of political dialogue.³⁶⁶ The representatives of Ireland and Mexico expressed disappointment at the Council's failure to prevent an escalation of the crisis in Ethiopia. However, the representative of Mexico expressed confidence that the Council had learned from past mistakes and that this time the Council would assume its responsibility to facilitate a political process that would lead to peace in Ethiopia. Most Council members also recognized the role of African regional and subregional organizations, specifically the African Union and IGAD, for their support for mediation efforts and assisting Ethiopia to find a solution to the Tigray crisis.³⁶⁷ The representative of China called for enhanced coordination between the United Nations and the African Union to promote nationwide peace and reconciliation in Ethiopia, and for the international community, and the Council in particular, to give the time and space that was needed for the African Union and others to make use of their good offices. Further, several Council members expressed concern at the use of hate speech and called for an end to the incitement to violence.³⁶⁸ In addition, the representative of the United Kingdom cautioned against the use of the state of emergency as an excuse to ignore human rights and international humanitarian law.

Table 1
Meetings: Peace and security in Africa

³⁶⁶ Ireland, China, United States and Russian Federation. For the Council press statement, see [SC/14691](#).

³⁶⁷ Ireland, Tunisia, also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Norway, Viet Nam, China, France, India, Estonia, United States, Russian Federation and Mexico.

³⁶⁸ Ireland, Tunisia, also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Norway, Viet Nam, United Kingdom, France and United States, Mexico.

<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.8812 2 July 2021			Ethiopia	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Acting Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator	12 Council members ^{a,b} , all invitees	
S/PV.8816 8 July 2021			Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Ethiopia and the Sudan ^c	Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Horn of Africa, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8843 26 August 2021			Ethiopia		12 Council members ^a , Secretary-General, invitee	
S/PV.8860 15 September 2021					One Council member (India)	
S/PV.8875 6 October 2021			Ethiopia		12 Council members ^d , Secretary-General, invitee	
S/PV.8899 8 November 2021			Ethiopia	Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, High Representative of the Chairperson for the African Union Commission for the Horn of Africa	12 Council members ^e , invitees	
S/PV.8903 12 November 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the G-5 Sahel Joint Force (S/2021/94)	Chad		Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, President of the Burkina Faso chapter of the Network on Peace and Security for Women in the Economic Community of West African States Space	12 Council members ^f , invitees.	S/PRST/2021/18

^a China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya (also on behalf of the Niger, Tunisia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.

^b The United Kingdom was represented by the Minister of State for South Asia, North Africa, the United Nations and the Commonwealth.

^c Egypt was represented by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ethiopia was represented by the Minister of Water, Irrigation and Energy; and the Sudan was represented the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

^d China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.

^e China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, Russian Federation, Tunisia (also on behalf of Kenya, Niger and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines), United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.

^f China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Mexico, Niger (also on behalf of Kenya, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Tunisia), Norway, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States, and Viet Nam.

Table 2
Videokonferences: Peace and security in Africa

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
18 May 2021	S/2021/484	Letter dated 20 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	
19 May 2021	S/2021/490	Letter dated 21 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	S/PRST/2021/10