

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. The only meeting of the Council held under this item in 2021 was the adoption of resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#).¹ More information on the meeting, including on participants, speakers and outcome, is given in the table below. 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 Council members also held closed videoconferences and informal consultations of the whole to discuss this item.³

On 29 October 2021, the Council adopted resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#), extending the mandate of MINURSO for a period of one year, until 31 October 2022.⁴ The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour (China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam) and two abstentions (Russian Federation and Tunisia).⁵ By the resolution, the Council welcomed the appointment of Staffan de Mistura as the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and urged the constructive resumption of the political process, building on the progress of the former Personal Envoy.⁶ The Council expressed deep concern about the violations of existing ceasefire.⁷ In that connection, the Council reiterated its full support for the Secretary-General and his

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

² The private meeting was held on 11 October 2021 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/76/2](#), part II, chap. 20.

³ The closed videoconference was held on 21 April 2021 (see [S/2021/1084](#)). At the time, consultations of the Council were 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). Informal consultations were held on 13 October 2021 see [A/76/2](#), part II, chap. 3.

⁴ Resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#), para. 1. For further information on the mandate of MINURSO, see part X, sect. I.

⁵ See [S/PV.8890](#).

⁶ Resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#), fourth preambular paragraph. See also [S/2021/851](#) and [S/2021/852](#).

⁷ Resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#), fourteenth preambular paragraph.

Personal Envoy to facilitate the negotiations process in order to achieve a solution to the Western Sahara question and its call upon the parties to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments with a view to achieving a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.⁸ 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 insufficient funding for those living in Tindouf refugee camps and the risks associated with the reduction of food assistance.⁹

Following the adoption of resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#), the representative of the Russian Federation explained his country's abstention underscoring that it was based exclusively on the rejection of the resolution's wording and on the assessment of the work conducted by the penholders.¹⁰ He explained that during the negotiations, his country's justified comments and compromise proposals had not been taken on board and a number of constructive proposals from other Council members had been overlooked. He added that it was for that reason that the resolution did not reflect the objective picture of what had happened on the issue of Western Sahara following the military escalation in November and would probably not be helpful in the efforts of the Personal Envoy to resume direct negotiations to reach a mutually acceptable decision that provided for the self-determination of Western Sahara. He further pointed out that the main problem remained unsolved, which in his view was the fact that in recent years, Council resolutions to extend MINURSO's mandate had included general wording on the need to abide by the so-called "realistic" approaches or to make some compromises, replacing the internationally agreed parameters for the settlement of the Western Sahara issue. Such signals led to ambiguity, undermined trust in the Council's work and made it more difficult to resume a direct dialogue. Among the delegations voting in favour, the representative of Mexico expressed regret at the unwillingness, during the negotiations, to include in the resolution important proposals that had the backing of several delegations, particularly for more frequent briefings in

⁸ Ibid., paras. 3 and 4.

⁹ Ibid., twenty-third preambular paragraph.

¹⁰ See [S/PV.8890](#).

the light of the significant deterioration of the situation with regard to human rights violations and the collapse of the ceasefire.¹¹ The representative of Viet Nam said that his country would have liked to see a more balanced text that better reflected the situation on the ground. The representative of China hoped that in future the Council would hold more consultations on the resolution on the extension of MINURSO's mandate in an effort to reflect the latest developments as well as the concerns of the various sides so as to form a more balanced text that could contribute to mutual trust and the reaching of consensus.

Further to the adoption, in a letter addressed to the President of the Council dated 24 November 2021, the Permanent Representative of South Africa transmitted a communiqué issued by the Frente POLISARIO.¹² In the communiqué, the Frente POLISARIO underscored that the resolution was a major setback that would have serious consequences on peace and stability in the entire region. The Frente POLISARIO further highlighted the failure of the resolution to provide any practical measures to ensure the full implementation of the mandate of MINURSO and confront the attempts by Morocco to legitimize the “colonial fait accompli” imposed by force.

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.8890 29 October 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2021/843)	Draft resolution submitted by the United States (S/2021/898)			7 Council members ^a	Resolution 2602 (2021) (13-0-2) ^b

^a China, France, Kenya, Mexico, Russian Federation, United States and Viet Nam.

^b *In favour*: China, Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, United Kingdom, United States and Viet Nam; *Against*: none; *Abstaining*: Russian Federation and Tunisia.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² See [S/2021/981](#).