

27. Women and peace and security

In 2021, the Security Council held one meeting under the item entitled “Women and peace and security” which took the form of an open debate.⁹⁵⁹ More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers is given in table 1 below. Council members also held one open videoconference in connection with this item.⁹⁶⁰ More information on the videoconferences is given in table 2 below. In 2021, no decisions were adopted in relation to this item.

On 14 April 2021, at the initiative of Viet Nam which held the Presidency for the month,⁹⁶¹ the Council held an open videoconference on the subject of sexual violence in conflict.⁹⁶² At the open videoconference, the Council heard briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, Dr. Denis Mukwege, Director of South Sudan Women with Disabilities Network and the Senior Women Protection Adviser at the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). In her briefing to the Council, the Special Representative underlined the evident chasm between resolutions and reality as detailed in the annual report of the Secretary-General,⁹⁶³ pointed the issue of chronic underreporting of wartime sexual violence due to stigma, insecurity, fear of reprisals and lack of services compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).⁹⁶⁴ She said that while the vast majority of the United Nations-verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence in the report targeted women and girls, reports of violence against men and boys were recorded in almost all of the countries examined. Noting the nexus between sexual violence, conflict-driven trafficking in persons and violent extremism, she expressed concern at the intensification of entrenched, localized conflicts, including in the context of tensions over transhumance corridors in the Central African Republic and the Sudan. The Special Representative highlighted the issue of weak State presence and infrastructure which became all the more acute during the pandemic and

⁹⁵⁹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II sect. II.

⁹⁶⁰ See [A/76/2](#), part II, chap. 16. See also [S/2021/1084](#). For more information on the procedures and working methods developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, see part II.

⁹⁶¹ A concept note was circulated by letter dated 5 April 2021 ([S/2021/333](#)).

⁹⁶² See [S/2021/375](#).

⁹⁶³ See [S/2021/312](#).

⁹⁶⁴ See [S/2021/375](#).

noted that sexual violence had not been prosecuted in the context of counter-terrorism trials even though it had been committed on a widespread scale by terrorist groups, leaving no legal precedent recognizing victims of sexual violence and legitimate victims of terrorism. Dr. Denis Mukwege underlined that the great challenge faced was to effectively implement the existing normative framework and to translate the many commitments made by the Security Council into concrete realities for the benefit of survivors. Recalling the Secretary-General's report, he noted that during the first 10 years of the mandate establishing a Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, not a single person or entity that perpetrated acts of sexual violence was subjected to the sanctions established by the Security Council for that very purpose. He expressed hope that the sanctions imposed in August 2020 on the leader of the armed *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation* group in the Central African Republic would not remain an isolated case. In this regard, he spoke about the importance of strengthening efforts to fight impunity so that sexual crimes were not repeated. Offering examples of the suffering of women and girls with disabilities in conflict situations, the Director of South Sudan Women with Disabilities Network urged the Council to reinforce the approach to be rights-based, accessible and designed in partnership with diverse women, including women with disabilities and to urge all Governments to uphold their obligations to provide services for gender-based violence, including sexual and reproductive health services. The Senior Women Protection Adviser of MINUSCA spoke about the socioeconomic obstacles that impeded survivors from reporting violations and the lack of access to justice. In this regard, she described the steps taken by the Mission to hear victims, provide assistance and restore their sense of confidence and belief in a future where impunity would give way to justice and development.

Following the briefings, Council members and other Member States addressed a variety of issues, including the importance of justice and a rights-based approach for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, putting an end to conflicts themselves for peaceful and resilient societies through conflict prevention and post-conflict reconciliation processes, and tackling the root causes of conflict-related sexual violence such as structural gender inequality and social norms with regards to stigmatization of survivors. Some Council members and other participants expressed support for the designation and use of sexual violence as a stand-alone criterion for sanctions and underlined the need to strengthen targeted measures by the Security Council as a

way to seek accountability.⁹⁶⁵ Several Member States stressed that the pandemic had not only exacerbated existing gender-based violence and inequality by impeding the access of survivors to health, justice and reparations system but also demonstrated the fragility of the progress in the field of women's rights and the risk of reversing the hard-won progress.⁹⁶⁶ In this connection, they urged the post-pandemic recovery efforts to incorporate inclusive, intersectional and gender-informed approach.⁹⁶⁷ Some Council Members and Member States also underlined the importance of protecting women human rights defenders and peacebuilders from reprisals and targeted attacks and called on incorporating monitoring and early warning processes on conflict-related sexual violence and prevention mechanisms in peacekeeping and special political missions.⁹⁶⁸

On 21 October 2021, at the initiative of Kenya which held the Presidency for the month,⁹⁶⁹ the Council held a high-level open debate under this item.⁹⁷⁰ During the open debate, Council members heard briefings by the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UN Women, the African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Adviser for the United Nations Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and the Legal Coordinator for the Indigenous Reservation of Tacueyo and member of the Association of Indigenous Cabildos of the North of Cauca. The Council also invited 35 Member States to deliver statements in-person in accordance with rule 37 of the provisional rules of procedure, the highest number since the resumption of in-person meetings on 25 May 2021, and 24 Member States and other delegations also participated by submitting written statements.⁹⁷¹

During the open debate, the Secretary-General, prefacing that power imbalance between men and women remained the most stubborn and persistent of all inequalities, stated that his commitment and call to action for human rights was at the heart of Our Common Agenda and

⁹⁶⁵ Albania, Estonia, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Argentina, Canada, Costa Rica, Denmark, European Union, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Ukraine.

⁹⁶⁶ China, Estonia, India, Afghanistan, Albania, Argentina, Australia, Bulgaria, Canada, Denmark, El Salvador, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Netherlands, Niger, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine.

⁹⁶⁷ India, Ireland, Mexico, Canada, Denmark, Greece, Guatemala and Netherlands.

⁹⁶⁸ Estonia, Ireland, Mexico, Australia, Belgium, European Union, Greece, Lebanon, Malta, Netherlands and South Africa.

⁹⁶⁹ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 13 October 2021 ([S/2021/875](#)).

⁹⁷⁰ See [S/PV.8886](#). For further information on high-level meetings and videoconferences, see part II, sect. VIII.

⁹⁷¹ See also [S/2021/886](#). For more information on participation in meetings, see part II, sect. VIII.

underlined the need to fast-track women's full and equal participation in every aspect, including peace processes and political transitions.⁹⁷² Highlighting the critical importance of increasing women's representation across all aspect of the United Nations peace activities, he called on the Council to support deepening partnerships with local women leaders to ensure their meaningful engagement in peace and political processes, help protect women human rights defenders and activists and promote full gender parity in peacebuilding and political system as countries transition to peace. The Secretary-General reaffirmed the importance of transforming words of support into actions across all countries under discussion in the Council. The Executive Director of UN Women addressed the need to shift the spending paradigms to increasing funding for the women and peace and security agenda while curbing the military spending and support women's meaningful participation in peace and security processes. In this connection, she called on the international community to support the participation of women in decision-making on defense and security sector expenditure and expand the use of gender-budgeting tools and programming and promoted the use of legislated quotas to increase women's representation in politics and peace processes. The Executive Director echoed the Secretary-General's call for protection of women in public life and human rights defenders from targeted violence and called on the Council to support women's civil society organizations, condemn, investigate and punish attacks against them and review the national laws that curtail civic spaces and their activities and funding. The African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security focused on the critical role of local women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and advocated for providing female peacekeepers with the necessary tools and allowing them to pursue leadership roles in field operations. The representative of the Indigenous Reservation of Tacueyo, speaking on behalf of the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security briefed on the importance of fully implementing the peace accord in Colombia, in particular the ethnic chapter and the gender provisions and addressing the crisis of violence against human rights defenders by ensuring adequate resources for the development of collective and territorial self-protection measures for indigenous, rural labourer and Afro-descendant communities.⁹⁷³

⁹⁷² See [S/PV.8886](#).

⁹⁷³ For further information on the Council's discussion concerning Colombia, see part I, sect. 13.

Participants at the open debate highlighted the essential need to investing in local women peacebuilders for their active participation across peacebuilding and peacekeeping continuum, increasing the number of female peacekeepers, and better equipping them with necessary tools. Many speakers echoed the briefers' call for protecting women human rights defenders at constant risk of reprisals and intimidation.⁹⁷⁴ Several Council Members and Member States also noted the important role of regional and subregional mechanisms and networks of women mediators for early warning and prevention, underlining their active leadership as an integral part of sustaining peace in local communities.⁹⁷⁵ Some participants expressed concerns about the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan and the erosion of rights and sidelining of women at the political level, urging all parties, especially the Taliban, to prioritize women's full, equal and meaningful participation in all decisions on the country's future.⁹⁷⁶ While affirming the significant progress made in implementing the women and peace and security agenda, the representative of the Russian Federation, noted that it was extremely important to avoid duplication in the work of different bodies such as the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council and the Peacebuilding Commission and that the Council should focus on situations that posed an imminent threat to international peace and security. He added that developing regional and national strategies or establishing national structures for the implementation of the women and peace and security agenda could be adopted only when there was an objective need arising from the existence of an armed conflict or a post-conflict settlement situation.⁹⁷⁷

⁹⁷⁴ See [S/PV.8886](#), Kenya, United Kingdom, Tunisia, China, Mexico, Estonia, Norway, and Australia. See also [S/2021/886](#), Bangladesh, Belgium, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Group of Friends of the African Women Leaders Network.

⁹⁷⁵ See [S/PV.8886](#), Kenya, Viet Nam, and Canada (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security). See also [S/2021/886](#), Chile, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, South Africa (on behalf of the Group of Friends of the African Women Leaders Network) and Uruguay. For further information on the Council's discussion on the cooperation with regional arrangements, see part VIII, sect. I.

⁹⁷⁶ [S/PV.8886](#), United Kingdom, Ireland, Mexico, Estonia, India, France, Canada (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security) and European Union. See also [S/2021/886](#), Germany, Italy, Lebanon, Netherlands, and Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan. For further information on the Council's discussion concerning Afghanistan, see part I, sect. 14.

⁹⁷⁷ See [S/PV.8886](#). For further information on the Council's discussion on the relations with the other principal organs of the United Nations, see part IV.

During the period under review, the Informal Experts Group on Women and Peace and Security continued to convene in accordance with resolution [2242 \(2015\)](#),⁹⁷⁸ including to address the response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.⁹⁷⁹

In 2021, the Council referred to women and peace and security related issues under multiple items on its agenda. As summarised in table 3 below, the Council addressed in its decisions various measures concerning the specific implementation of the women and peace and security agenda and, in particular, in relation to the following categories: (i) the representation and participation of women in public affairs and decision-making, as well as in peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution; (ii) the participation of women in peacekeeping operations, including through the appointment of women’s protection and gender advisers; (iii) the development and inclusion of gender mainstreaming, gender expertise and gender-sensitive responses by Member States and UN entities, including socioeconomic empowerment, participation of women in security sector reforms and counter-terrorism efforts; and (iv) combatting sexual violence including through the monitoring, analysing and reporting on conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence as well as its accountability mechanisms including prosecutions of the perpetrators of sexual violence and the use of targeted sanctions.

Table 1
Meetings: Women and peace and security

<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.8886 S/2021/886 21 October 2021	Report of the Secretary-General on women and peace and security (S/2021/827)		35 Member States ^a	Executive Director of UN-Women, African Union Special Envoy for Women, Peace and Security, Legal Coordinator for the Indigenous Reservation of Tacueyo and member of the Association of Indigenous Cabildos of the North of Cauca, Ambassador for Gender	Secretary-General, all Council members, ^b all invitees	

⁹⁷⁸ Resolution [2242 \(2015\)](#), para. 5(a).

⁹⁷⁹ See [S/2021/166](#), [S/2021/264](#), [S/2021/380](#), [S/2021/464](#), [S/2021/625](#), [S/2021/668](#), [S/2021/770](#), [S/2021/907](#) and [S/2021/1012](#).

<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>
				and Diversity of the European External Action Service		

Table 2
Videoconferences: Women and peace and security

<i>Videoconference date</i>	<i>Videoconference record</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining) and record of written procedure</i>
14 April 2021	S/2021/375	Letter dated 16 April 2021 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council	

Table 3
Selection of provisions relevant to women and peace and security, by theme and agenda item

	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
	Representation and participation of women in political processes at all levels, including decision-making		
	Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2021/10	Seventeenth
	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2021/3	Fourteenth, Sixteenth
		S/PRST/2021/16	Fifth, Eleventh
	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2593 (2021)	4
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2605 (2021)	7, 9, 47
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2612 (2021)	2
Country- and region-specific	The situation in the Great Lakes region	S/PRST/2021/19	Seventeenth
	The situation in Haiti	S/PRST/2021/7	Fourth
	The situation in Iraq	Resolution 2576 (2021)	4(e)
	The situation in Libya	S/PRST/2021/6	Fourth
		S/PRST/2021/12	Third
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2584 (2021)	5, 53
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2568 (2021)	34
		Resolution 2592 (2021)	6(a), 6(d)
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2567 (2021)	3(c)(ii), 22,
		Resolution 2579 (2021)	4(iv), 12
	S/PRST/2021/14	Fifth	
	S/PRST/2021/20	Fourth	

Participation of women in peacebuilding and in conflict prevention and resolution			
Country- and region-specific	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2021/3	Sixth
	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2561 (2021)	4(f)
		Resolution 2587 (2021)	4(f), 5
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2605 (2021)	34(b)(iii), 34(b)(iv), 47
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2612 (2021)	17, 29(ii)(c), 32
	The situation in the Great Lakes region	S/PRST/2021/19	Seventeenth
	The situation in Iraq	Resolution 2576 (2021)	4(a)
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2584 (2021)	2, 30(a)(v), 30(a)(vi)
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2592 (2021)	6(d)
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2567 (2021)	3(c)(ii), 6, 18(a)
Resolution 2579 (2021)		3(i)(c), 3(ii)(a),	
	Resolution 2609 (2021)	21	
Thematic	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	S/PRST/2021/9	Fifth, Seventh
		S/PRST/2021/21	Twenty-ninth, Thirtieth
	Maintenance of international peace and security	S/PRST/2021/23	Seventh
		S/PRST/2021/23	Eleventh
United Nations peacekeeping operations	Resolution 2594 (2021)	2, 5, 11	
Socio-economic environment for the meaningful participation and empowerment of women / funding of national programmes			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2561 (2021)	4(f)
		Resolution 2587 (2021)	4(f)
	The situation in the Great Lakes region	S/PRST/2021/19	Seventeenth
	The situation concerning Iraq	Resolution 2576 (2021)	4(e)
Conflict-related sexual violence and gender-based violence			
Country- and region-specific	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2021/3	Eighth
		S/PRST/2021/16	Twelfth
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2566 (2021)	3(iv)
		Resolution 2605 (2021)	27, 34(a)(iv), 34(a)(vi), 35(a)(ii), 35(f)(vii), 47
	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2561 (2021)	16
The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2612 (2021)	9, 10, 11, 29(i)(h), 29(ii)(k), 33, 34	

	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2584 (2021)	9, 30(c)(iii), 30(d)(ii), 47, 50, 54, 55, 56
	The situation in Myanmar	S/PRST/2021/5	Second
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2564 (2021)	8, Annex
		Resolution 2591 (2021)	25, 26
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2568 (2021)	19, 35, 36
		Resolution 2592 (2021)	6(i), 10, 14(b), 14(c), 14(d)
		Resolution 2607 (2021)	14, 35, 36
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2567 (2021)	3(a)(iv), 3(a)(vii), 3(a)(viii), 3(d)(ii), 9, 13, 15, 18(e), 18(l), 24
		Resolution 2577 (2021)	2(e), 20
		Resolution 2579 (2021)	3(iii)(d), 3(ii)(b), 15
Thematic	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	S/PRST/2021/21	Tenth
	Children and armed conflict	Resolution 2601 (2021)	1, 10
	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	S/PRST/2021/1	Second, twelfth
		Resolution 2610 (2021)	15, 105
	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Resolution 2594 (2021)	5
Role of women in countering terrorism and violent extremism			
Thematic	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	S/PRST/2021/21	Twenty-ninth
	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	S/PRST/2021/1	Twelfth
		Resolution 2617 (2021)	27, 36
Gender mainstreaming, gender expertise and gender-sensitive responses			
Country- and region-specific	Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2021/10	Eleventh, seventeenth
	Peace consolidation in West Africa	S/PRST/2021/16	Eleventh
	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2587 (2021)	16
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2605 (2021)	11, 34(a)(iv), 35(e)(i), 35(e)(ii), 47
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2612 (2021)	42, 46
	The situation the Middle East	Resolution 2591 (2021)	26
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2607 (2021)	38

	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2609 (2021)	30(a), 30(l), 31
Thematic	United Nations peacekeeping operations	Resolution 2594 (2021)	6
		S/PRST/2021/17	Eighth
	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	Resolution 2617 (2021)	36
Women's Protection and Women's Protection Advisers			
Country- and region-specific	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2567 (2021)	3(a)(i)
		Resolution 2579 (2021)	3(ii)(c), 3(ii)(d)
		Resolution 2609 (2021)	21
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2605 (2021)	34(a)(iv)
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2612 (2021)	32, 33
Participation of women in peacekeeping operations			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in Cyprus	Resolution 2587 (2021)	16
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2612 (2021)	46
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2581 (2021)	13
		Resolution 2591 (2021)	27
		Resolution 2613 (2021)	13
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2567 (2021)	23
		Resolution 2609 (2021)	30(l), 31
	The situation concerning Western Sahara	Resolution 2602 (2021)	11
Thematic	Cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional organizations in maintaining international peace and security	S/PRST/2021/21	Twenty-fifth
	United Nations peacekeeping operations	S/PRST/2021/11	Thirteenth
Participation of women in the security sector and in security sector reform (SSR)			
Country- and region-specific	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2612 (2021)	20
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2584 (2021)	30(iii), 53
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2591 (2021)	26