



Security Council

Distr.: General
3 November 2020

Original: English

Letter dated 30 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to Security Council resolution 2548 (2020), related to the agenda item entitled “The situation concerning Western Sahara” and adopted on 30 October 2020. Resolution 2548 (2020) was adopted in accordance with the voting procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council dated 27 March 2020 (S/2020/253), a procedure agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic.

Pursuant to that procedure, I enclose herewith copies of the related documents:

My letter dated 29 October 2020, addressed to the Permanent Representatives of Security Council members (see annex 1), putting to the vote the draft resolution contained in document S/2020/1039 (see enclosure to annex 1);

Letters received in reply from Security Council members indicating their national position on the draft resolution (see annexes 2 to 16);

Statements subsequently submitted by Security Council members providing explanations of vote (see annexes 17 to 25).

This letter and its annexes will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vassily **Nebenzia**
President of the Security Council



Annex 1

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to the Secretary-General and the Permanent Representatives of the members of the Security Council

In accordance with the procedure agreed upon by the members of the Security Council in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, as set out in the letter dated 27 March 2020 from the President of the Security Council addressed to all members of the Council (S/2020/253), I would like to draw your attention to the following.

The members of the Council have discussed a draft resolution, submitted by the United States of America, in connection with the agenda item entitled “The situation concerning Western Sahara”. That draft resolution, contained in document S/2020/1039 and enclosed herein, has been put into blue.

In my capacity as President of the Security Council, I hereby put the abovementioned draft resolution to a vote. The non-extendable 24-hour voting period for this draft resolution will begin at 12 p.m. on Thursday, 29 October 2020. The non-extendable 24-hour voting period will expire at 12 p.m. on Friday, 30 October 2020.

Please submit your vote (in favour, against, or abstain) on the draft resolution, as well as your possible explanation of vote, by sending a letter signed by the Permanent Representative or Chargé d'affaires a.i. within the non-extendable 24-hour voting period set out above to the Director of the Security Council Affairs Division of the Secretariat (egian@un.org).

It is my intention to circulate a letter recording the outcome of the vote within three hours of the conclusion of the 24-hour voting period. I also intend to convene a video-teleconference of the Security Council to announce the outcome of the vote shortly after the conclusion of the voting period, on the afternoon of Friday, 30 October 2020.

(Signed) Vassily Nebenzia
President of the Security Council

Enclosure

United Nations

S/2020/1039

**Security Council**Provisional
23 October 2020

Original : English

United States of America: draft resolution*The Security Council,**Recalling and reaffirming* all its previous resolutions on Western Sahara,*Reaffirming* its strong support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his incoming Personal Envoy to implement resolutions 1754 (2007), 1783 (2007), 1813 (2008), 1871 (2009), 1920 (2010), 1979 (2011), 2044 (2012), 2099 (2013), 2152 (2014), 2218 (2015), 2285 (2016), 2351 (2017), 2414 (2018), 2440 (2018), 2468 (2019), and 2494 (2019),*Paying* tribute to Horst Köhler, former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara, and commending his efforts in holding the roundtable process, which created new momentum in the political process,*Looking forward* to the appointment of a new Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara at the earliest opportunity,*Welcoming* the new momentum created by the first roundtable meeting on 5–6 December 2018 and the second roundtable meeting on 21–22 March 2019, and commitment by Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria, and Mauritania to engage in the UN political process on Western Sahara in a serious and respectful manner in order to identify elements of convergence,*Encouraging* the resumption of consultations between the incoming Personal Envoy and Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria and Mauritania in this regard to build on the progress achieved,*Reaffirming* its commitment to assist the parties to achieve a just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution, based on compromise, which will 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,*Reiterating* its call upon Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria and Mauritania to cooperate more fully with each other, including through building additional trust, and with the United Nations, as well as to strengthen their involvement in the political process and to achieve progress towards a political solution,*Recognizing* that achieving a political solution to this long-standing dispute and enhanced cooperation between the Member States of the Maghreb Arab Union

would contribute to stability and security, in turn leading to jobs, growth and opportunities for all the peoples in the Sahel region,

Welcoming the efforts of the Secretary-General to keep all peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), under close review and reiterating the need for the Council to pursue a rigorous, strategic approach to peacekeeping deployments, and effective management of resources,

Recalling resolution 2378 (2017) and its request of the Secretary-General to ensure that data related to the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations, including peacekeeping performance data, is used to improve analytics and the evaluation of mission operations, based on clear and well identified benchmarks, and *further recalling* resolution 2436 (2018) and its request of the Secretary-General to ensure that decisions to recognize and incentivize outstanding performance and decisions regarding deployment, remediation, training, withholding of financial reimbursement, and repatriation of uniformed or dismissal of civilian personnel, are predicated on objective performance data,

Recalling resolution 2242 (2015) and 2538 (2020) and its aspiration to increase the number of women in military and police contingents of United Nations peacekeeping operations,

Recognizing the important role played by MINURSO on the ground and the need for it to fully implement its mandate, including its role in supporting the incoming Personal Envoy to achieve a mutually acceptable political solution,

Expressing concern about the violations of existing agreements, reiterating the importance of full adherence to these commitments in order to sustain momentum in the Western Sahara political process, and taking note of the commitments provided by the Frente Polisario to the former Personal Envoy, and in this regard *welcoming* the Secretary-General's assessment on 23 September 2020 that the situation in Western Sahara has remained relatively calm with the ceasefire continuing to hold and respect by the parties for MINURSO's mandate,

Taking note of the Moroccan proposal presented on 11 April 2007 to the Secretary-General and *welcoming* serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward towards resolution; also *taking note* of the Polisario Front proposal presented 10 April 2007 to the Secretary-General,

Encouraging in this context, the parties to demonstrate further political will towards a solution including by expanding upon their discussion of each other's proposals and recommitting to UN efforts in a spirit of realism and compromise, and *further encouraging* the neighbouring countries to make contributions to the political process,

Encouraging the parties to cooperate further with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees in identifying and *implementing* confidence-building measures that can serve to foster the trust necessary for a successful political process,

Stressing the importance of improving the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps, and *encouraging* the parties to work with the international community to develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights, *bearing* in mind their relevant obligations under international law,

Encouraging the parties to sustain in their respective efforts to enhance the promotion and protection of human rights in Western Sahara and the Tindouf refugee camps, including the freedoms of expression and association,

Welcoming in this regard, steps and initiatives taken by Morocco, and the role played by the National Council on Human Rights Commissions operating in Dakhla and Laayoune, and Morocco's interaction with Special Procedures of the United Nations Human Rights Council,

Strongly encouraging enhancing cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), including through facilitating visits to the region,

Noting with deep concern the continued hardships faced by Sahrawi refugees and their dependency on external humanitarian assistance, and *further noting with deep concern* insufficient funding for those living in Tindouf refugee camps and the risks associated with the reduction of food assistance,

Reiterating its request for consideration of a refugee registration in the Tindouf refugee camps and *emphasizing* efforts be made in this regard,

Recalling United Nations Security Council resolutions 1325 and 2250 and related resolutions; *stressing* the importance of a commitment by the parties to continue the process of negotiations through the United Nations-sponsored talks and *encouraging* the full, effective and meaningful participation of women and active and meaningful participation of youth in these talks,

Recognizing that the status quo is not acceptable, and *noting further* that progress in negotiations is essential in order to improve the quality of life of the people of Western Sahara in all its aspects,

Affirming its full support for Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara and Head of MINURSO Colin Stewart,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General of 23 September 2020 (S/2020/938),

1. *Decides* to extend the mandate of MINURSO until 31 October 2021;
2. *Emphasizes* the need to achieve a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution to the question of Western Sahara based on compromise and the importance of aligning the strategic focus of MINURSO and orienting resources of the United Nations to this end;
3. *Expresses* its full support for the ongoing efforts of the Secretary-General and his incoming Personal Envoy to sustain the renewed negotiations process in order to achieve a solution to the Western Sahara question, *notes* the intention of the former Personal Envoy to invite Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria, and Mauritania to meet again in the same format, and *welcomes* the commitment of Morocco, the Frente Polisario, Algeria, and Mauritania to remain engaged throughout the duration of this process, in a spirit of realism and compromise, to ensure a successful outcome;
4. *Calls 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 will 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;
5. *Invites* Member States to lend appropriate assistance to these talks;

6. *Reaffirms* the need for full respect of the military agreements reached with MINURSO with regard to the ceasefire and *calls on* the parties to adhere fully to those agreements, implement their commitments to the former Personal Envoy, and refrain from any actions that could undermine UN-facilitated negotiations or further destabilize the situation in the Western Sahara;

7. *Reiterates* its call upon all parties to cooperate fully with MINURSO, including its free interaction with all interlocutors, and to take the necessary steps to ensure the security of as well as unhindered movement and immediate access for the United Nations and associated personnel in carrying out their mandate, in conformity with existing agreements;

8. *Emphasizes* the importance of a renewed commitment by the parties to advancing the political process in preparation for further negotiations, *recalls* its endorsement of the recommendation in the report of 14 April 2008 (S/2008/251) that realism and a spirit of compromise by the parties are essential to achieve progress in negotiations, and *encourages* the neighbouring countries to make important, active contributions to this process;

9. *Calls upon* the parties to demonstrate political will and work in an atmosphere propitious for dialogue in order to advance negotiations, thus ensuring implementation of resolutions 1754 (2007), 1783 (2007), 1813 (2008), 1871 (2009), 1920 (2010), 1979 (2011), 2044 (2012), 2099 (2013), 2152 (2014), 2218 (2015), 2285 (2016), 2351 (2017), 2414 (2018), 2440 (2018), 2468 (2019), and 2494 (2019) and the success of negotiations;

10. *Requests* the Secretary-General to brief the Security Council on a regular basis, and at any time he deems appropriate during the mandate period, to include within six months of this mandate's renewal and again prior to its expiration, on the status and progress of these negotiations under his auspices, on the implementation of this resolution, challenges to MINURSO's operations and steps taken to address them, *expresses its intention* to meet to receive and discuss his briefings and in this regard, *further requests* the Secretary-General to provide a report on the situation in Western Sahara well before the end of the mandate period;

11. *Welcomes* the initiatives undertaken by the Secretary-General to standardize a culture of performance in UN peacekeeping, and *reaffirms* its support for the development of a comprehensive and integrated performance policy framework that identifies clear standards of performance for evaluating all United Nations civilian and uniformed personnel working in and supporting peacekeeping operations that facilitates effective and full implementation of mandates, and includes comprehensive and objective methodologies based on clear and well-defined benchmarks to ensure accountability for underperformance and incentives and recognition for outstanding performance, and calls on him to apply this framework to MINURSO as described in resolution 2436 (2018), *requests* the Secretary-General to seek to increase the number of women in MINURSO, as well as to ensure the full, effective, and meaningful participation of women in all aspects of operations;

12. *Urges* the parties and neighbouring states to engage productively with MINURSO as it further considers how new technologies can be used to reduce risk, improve force protection, and better implement its mandate;

13. *Encourages* the parties to cooperate with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to identify and implement confidence-building measures, including to engage women and youth, and *encourages* neighbouring states to support these efforts;

14. *Urges* Member States to provide new and additional voluntary contributions to fund food programmes to ensure that the humanitarian needs of refugees are adequately addressed and avoid reductions in food rations;

15. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to take necessary measures to ensure full compliance of all personnel in MINURSO with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to keep the Council fully informed through his reports to the Council about the Mission's progress in this regard, and *urges* troop-contributing and police-contributing countries to continue taking appropriate preventative action including vetting of all personnel, predeployment and in-mission awareness training, and to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel through timely investigation of allegations by troop-contributing and police-contributing countries and MINURSO, as appropriate;

16. *Decides* to remain seized of the matter.

Annex 2

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to the President of the Security Council's letter of 29 October 2020 relating to the draft resolution on the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (S/2020/1039).

In accordance with the procedure set forth for the adoption of resolutions under the current extraordinary circumstance caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, I am pleased to indicate that Belgium votes in favour of this draft resolution. Belgium will also submit an explanation of vote.

(Signed) Philippe **Kridelka**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations

Annex 3**Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I would like to thank you, Sir, and your team for the strong support in facilitating the voting procedure.

Please be kindly informed that China votes in favour of draft resolution S/2020/1039, submitted by the United States of America for mandate renewal of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, and attaches herewith its explanation of vote.

(Signed) **Zhang Jun**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations

Annex 4

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to your letter dated 29 October 2020, regarding the Security Council draft resolution contained in document S/2020/1039, submitted under agenda item entitled “The situation concerning Western Sahara”.

Upon instructions from my Government, the delegation of the Dominican Republic votes in favour of the abovementioned draft resolution.

(Signed) José **Singer Weisinger**
Ambassador

Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic

Annex 5**Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to inform, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, that my delegation votes in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the United States of America, in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara”, contained in document S/2020/1039.

Please find attached an explanation of vote in this connection.

(Signed) **Sven Jürgenson**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations

Annex 6

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

[Original: French]

I refer to the letter dated 29 October 2020, calling on the members of the Council to vote on the draft resolution submitted by the United States under the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara”, put in blue under the symbol S/2020/1039. France votes in favour.

(Signed) **Nicolas de Riviere**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations

Annex 7**Letter dated 30 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

It is my honour to write to you, Sir, in response to the letter of the President of the Security Council dated 29 October 2020 initiating a written voting procedure, in line with the agreement reached between the members of the Security Council.

The vote of the Federal Republic of Germany on the draft resolution submitted by the United States of America in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara”, as contained in document S/2020/1039, is as follows:

The Federal Republic of Germany votes in favour of the above mentioned resolution.

(Signed) **Christophe Heusgen**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations

Annex 8

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I am writing in reference to the letter by the Permanent Representative of Russian Federation to the United Nations, in his capacity as the President of the Security Council, dated 29 October 2020, regarding the draft resolution on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (S/2020/1039).

I hereby indicate that Indonesia votes in favour of the abovementioned draft resolution.

(Signed) Dian Triansyah **Djani**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations

Annex 9**Letter dated 30 October 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Niger to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I am writing in response to the letter of the President of the Security Council dated 29 October 2020, calling on the members of the Council to express their votes on the draft resolution (S/2020/1039), submitted by the United States of America, under the agenda item "The situation concerning Western Sahara".

In accordance with the agreed temporary procedures for the adoption of resolutions during the coronavirus disease pandemic restrictions, I have the honour to indicate that the Republic of the Niger decides to vote in favour of the said draft resolution.

(Signed) Niandou **Aougi**
Minister Counsellor
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Niger to the United Nations

Annex 10

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to refer to the letter of the President of the Security Council of 29 October 2020 on the beginning of the voting procedure for the draft resolution in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara” (S/2020/1039).

In accordance with the procedure for the adoption of resolutions of the Security Council being in place during the duration of the restrictions on movement in New York due to the coronavirus disease pandemic outlined in the letter by the President of the Security Council of 27 March 2020 (S/2020/253), I have the honour to inform you that the Russian Federation abstains in the voting on draft resolution S/2020/1039. Please find attached an explanation of vote in this regard.

(Signed) Vassily **Nebenzia**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations

Annex 11**Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to refer to the draft resolution (S/2020/1039) submitted by the United States of America, in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara”.

In this respect, I wish to inform that Saint Vincent and the Grenadines votes in favour of the abovementioned draft resolution.

(Signed) Inga Rhonda **King**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
to the United Nations

Annex 12

Letter dated 29 October from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I refer to your letter dated 29 October 2020, regarding the Security Council draft resolution, submitted by the United States of America in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara”, contained in document S/2020/1039.

The delegation of the Republic of South Africa abstains in the voting on the abovementioned draft resolution. An explanation of vote on this resolution is also attached.

(Signed) Jerry Matthews **Matjila**
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations

Annex 13**Letter dated 29 October from the Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council**

With reference to the letter dated 29 October 2020 emanating from the Permanent Representative of Russia, in his capacity as President of the Security Council, regarding the draft resolution submitted by the United States of America in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara”, as contained in document S/2020/1039, I would like to inform you that Tunisia votes in favour of that draft resolution.

(Signed) Tarek **Ladeb**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Tunisia to the United Nations

Annex 14

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

With reference to the letter from the President of the Security Council on 29 October 2020, the United Kingdom votes in favour of the draft resolution (S/2020/1039) in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara”.

(Signed) James **Roscoe**
Ambassador

Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations

Annex 15

Letter dated 29 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America addressed to the President of the Security Council

On the draft resolution submitted by the United States of America in connection with the agenda item “The situation concerning Western Sahara” (S/2020/1039), the United States of America votes in favour.

(Signed) **Kelly Craft**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the United States of America
to the United Nations

Annex 16

Letter dated 30 October 2020 from the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

In reference to the letter of the President of the Security Council of 29 October 2020 relating to the draft resolution under the agenda item entitled “the situation concerning Western Sahara”, as contained in document S/2020/1039, I would like to hereby inform you that Viet Nam votes in favour of the said draft resolution.

(Signed) **Dang Dinh Quy**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations

Annex 17**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Philippe Kridelka**

[Original: French]

Belgium voted in favour of resolution 2548 (2020), which renews the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for 12 months.

Belgium thanks the delegation of the United States of America for its transparent work.

Belgium welcomes the work of MINURSO. We have confidence in its neutral reporting role and the stabilizing nature of its presence, which helps ease tensions. We call on the parties to cooperate unreservedly with the Mission.

Belgium reiterates its appreciation of the commitment of, and especially for the results achieved by, the former Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Horst Köhler. We hope a capable successor will be appointed as soon as possible to resume the process of dialogue based on the work of President Köhler.

Finally, Belgium is concerned at the increase in ceasefire violations and calls for the greatest of restraint. Belgium stresses that the only solution to the question of Western Sahara is an inclusive political one.

Annex 18

Statement by the Permanent Mission of China to the United Nations

Despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus disease pandemic, the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) has performed its mandates actively, making important contributions to the political settlement of the issue of Western Sahara and the maintenance of regional stability. China supports the extension of the mandate of MINURSO and its continued constructive role in the political process to solve the Western Sahara issue.

We hope that the Security Council will have more thorough consultations on draft resolutions on mandate renewal for MINURSO in the future to make the text more balanced, achieve consensus through consultation and send a positive signal. I believe this will be conducive to the political process for Western Sahara. In addition, the personal envoy of the Secretary-General should be appointed as soon as possible to facilitate the resumption of the Geneva round table process and create favourable conditions for advancing the political settlement.

China will continue to uphold an objective and just position and encourage the two parties to seek a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution through dialogue and negotiation on the basis of relevant Security Council resolutions.

Annex 19**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Estonia to the United Nations**

Estonia welcomes the adoption of resolution 2548 (2020), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) for another year.

We would like to take this opportunity to reiterate Estonia's full support to MINURSO and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Estonia supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the Western Sahara conflict, based on the relevant Security Council resolutions.

It is important not to lose the political momentum that was achieved in the round table meetings in 2018 and 2019. In this connection, we hope that a new personal envoy of the Secretary-General will be appointed as soon as possible and that further talks between the parties can be pursued in a spirit of compromise.

Moreover, in the light of the latest report by the Secretary-General (S/2020/938), it is important to stress and call for the parties to continue their cooperation with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Stewart and MINURSO.

Annex 20**Statement by the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations**

[Original: French]

France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2548 (2020), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum on Western Sahara (MINURSO) for one year.

France welcomes the efforts of the United States of America to take into account the unanimous request by the members of the Security Council with regard to the swift appointment of a personal envoy of the Secretary-General and the need for the parties to fully cooperate with MINURSO, especially with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

The swift appointment of a new personal envoy of the Secretary-General for Western Sahara is indeed necessary to revive the momentum begun by President Köhler with the Geneva round tables. We have full confidence in the efforts of the Secretary-General in this regard.

At the same time, we reiterate our full support for MINURSO, which plays an essential role in assuring respect for the ceasefire and constitutes a key factor in ensuring stability of the region. It also helps create conducive conditions for the resumption on the political process.

France recalls its concern at the rise in violations recorded in the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/938). We call on the parties to fully implement the ceasefire agreement.

France is also concerned at the ongoing blockade in the Guerguerat buffer zone, which risks creating tensions that could undermining the political process. We express our full support for the statement by the spokesperson of the Secretary-General calling for the parties to show restraint in order to avoid any escalation, especially in Guerguerate. We also support his call against impeding commercial or civilian traffic, or altering the status quo of the buffer zone. France supports the efforts of MINURSO in this regard.

In conclusion, we recall, more broadly, France's full support for the efforts of the Secretary-General towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution in Western Sahara, in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. In this context, France views the Moroccan self-government plan of 2007 as a credible and serious basis for discussions towards a resumption in dialogue.

Annex 21**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani**

I would like to begin my statement by reiterating my delegation's full support for the good offices of the Secretary-General.

Indonesia underscores the pivotal role being played by the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) in maintaining a conducive environment for the peace process. We would like to urge all parties to continue to engage constructively with MINURSO in pursuing peace and security. For that reason, Indonesia welcomes the renewal of the MINURSO mandate, and voted in favour of resolution 2548 (2020). We believe that the resolution reflects a delicate balance, considering the sensitivity of the issue, the absence of a personal envoy and lack of an active political process.

Indonesia therefore urges the Secretary-General to appoint, without further delay, a new personal envoy who can continue and expand the good work of the previous envoy, Mr. Horst Köhler. Any further delay would become a significant impediment to the political process for finding a solution acceptable to all parties.

We thank the United States of America as penholder for its approach in preparing the text. We also commend the constructive engagement of all parties in the political process, and call on them to remain committed and to extend their fullest support and cooperation to the personal envoy to achieve progress towards a political solution.

Annex 22**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations**

The Russian Federation abstained in the voting on resolution 2548 (2020), on the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), put forward by the United States of America. We did so due to the fact that the process of elaborating and endorsing that document was neither transparent nor consultative. None of our principled and well-substantiated considerations, including those of a compromise nature, that we repeatedly brought to the attention of the United States was taken into account. A whole range of practical proposals articulated by other Security Council members was also left unanswered. As a result, the text remains unbalanced. All this adds to doubts regarding arrangements on informal penholdership of country files at the Security Council.

In recent years, resolutions on the renewal of MINURSO mandate received amendments that, in our view, affect the Security Council's unbiased and impartial approach to the issue of Western Sahara. Substitution of fundamental principles of the Western Saharan settlement by general remarks about the need to stick to realistic approaches and seek compromise produces ambiguity, undermines trust in our work and obscures prospects for resuming the political process. The attempt to boost the peace process by using language that blurs previously agreed parameters of the Western Saharan settlement would rather produce the opposite result. We had not agreed to this amendment before, and we were not able to support it today.

Once again, we would like to reiterate our consistent position with regard to a settlement in Western Sahara. We stand for a well-balanced and unbiased approach, support direct negotiations between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO).

In our capacity as a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the Group of Friends of Western Sahara, we maintain active contacts with all interested stakeholders — we work with Moroccans, Polisarians, Algerians and Mauriticians. We call on all the parties concerned to refrain from taking any unilateral steps that could undermine efforts to relaunch substantive political dialogue.

We are convinced that only a political solution based on relevant Security Council resolutions can overcome disputes and ensure a just and sustainable Western Sahara settlement. The final formula must be based on compromise and mutual agreement by Moroccans and Polisarians alike, and envisage the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the framework of procedures and in line with the goals and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. This concept is central to the Western Saharan settlement, and it must not be replaced by other formulas.

Like other members of the Security Council, we look forward to the appointment of a new personal envoy of the Secretary-General, and to progress in resuming the negotiation process between sides towards a Western Saharan settlement, with the participation of neighbouring States. However, we have to warn all that the document adopted today may, contrary to the expectations of its authors, have a negative effect on the efforts of the future personal envoy.

Russia will remain an unbiased actor for a Western Sahara settlement, maintaining contacts with all regional sides. We reiterate our support for MINURSO, which plays a pre-eminent stabilizing role in creating a favourable environment on the ground for resuming dialogue between Morocco and the Frente Polisario, and in promoting the peace process.

Annex 23**Statement by the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations**

At the outset, South Africa wishes to reiterate its support for efforts to achieve a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.

In this regard, South Africa fully supports the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), whose primary mandate, as established in resolution 690 (1991) and all subsequent resolutions, is the holding of a free and fair referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara.

Our conviction remains that a resolution of the Western Sahara matter lies in upholding international legality and that the parties should conduct themselves within the confines of adopted Security Council resolutions and international norms. The Council should never permit international legality to be overturned by political reality; doing so would undermine the very foundation of the rules-based international system that the United Nations is built upon.

In this regard, South Africa firmly believes that the Council has a vital role to play in resolving the issue of Western Sahara. However, we believe it has fallen short of its responsibility. During our 2019-2020 term on the Council, South Africa has abstained twice on the MINURSO mandate renewal due to the substance and working methods of the Western Sahara file.

It has been disconcerting to us that the Security Council working methods on the Western Sahara file have been uniquely biased and non-transparent. This is a disturbing trend, given that it is the duty of the Security Council to objectively assist the parties to move towards a mutually acceptable, negotiated settlement, and to treat the interests and concerns of both parties in a balanced and equal manner.

In terms of the working methods on this file in the Security Council, South Africa has consistently raised its concerns that the “negotiating process” of the draft resolution through the Group of Friends remains an obstacle to making progress on the Western Sahara file and undermines the working methods of the Council. A draft text is presented to Council members, who have to accept it as a fait accompli despite the fact that the majority of us has been elected to serve on the Security Council and have the responsibility to engage on every matter on the Council’s agenda.

South Africa would also like to place on record that this is the only mandate that is negotiated in this manner and is not considerate of the views of Member States, particularly of African Member States, which are excluded from the Group of Friends. In this regard, unlike other Council outcomes, there was once again no real attempt to reach a compromise on the contentious paragraphs so that we could be assured of a balanced text reflective of the views of all Council members. Let us be clear: there was no attempt to reach consensus.

Regarding the substance of resolution 2548 (2020), South Africa would like to raise several points. As it stands, the text does not reflect the current realities on the ground, which were clearly outlined by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his briefing to the Council on developments pertaining to the human rights, humanitarian, security and political situation in Western Sahara.

In terms of the appointment of a personal envoy, South Africa fully supports the efforts of the Secretary-General to find a suitable candidate. However, the current text does not adequately reflect the urgency that the United Nations find a personal envoy to resume the stalled United Nations-led political process.

Given the growing sentiments and calls by one of the parties, the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguía el-Hamra y Río de Oro to disengage from the United Nations process due to perceptions that the United Nations is not doing enough, South Africa advocated for a more balanced text, which would have sent a positive signal to the parties that one party was not favoured over another.

It is in this context, in the absence of a personal envoy and with a stalled political process, that we supported a return to a six-month mandate. The intention was to send a strong signal to the parties that the Security Council remained seized of this matter, following the developments on the ground. Additionally, we would have hoped that this would prompt the parties to cooperate with MINURSO and each other, while taking steps to build much-needed mutual trust.

The notable decline in compliance with the terms of military agreement No. 1, as described in the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/938), is a direct result of the stalled political process and the frustration among the parties. The situation in Guerguerat is a case in point. We therefore urge both the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO to strictly abide by the terms of the ceasefire agreements, particularly military agreement No. 1, to avoid acts that could lead to a rise in tension and possible hostilities in the territory.

South Africa has repeatedly called for the clarification of the terms “realistic/realism”, and this issue has not been satisfactorily addressed. In our view these terms remain ambiguous, and that does not contribute to a neutral political process. The word “realism” in the draft resolution would be interpreted as implying that the Council favours political reality over international legality. This interpretation could set a precedent that would set aside international law in favour of the principle that “might is right”.

South Africa maintains that realism in the context of resolution 2548 (2020) is related to the negotiations and not to any outcome. We note and recall that the use of the terms “compromise” and “realistic/realism” are derived from the recommendation set forth in the Secretary-General’s April 2008 report (S/2008/251), which calls on both parties, Frente POLISARIO and Morocco, to show realism and a spirit of compromise as these are essential to maintaining the momentum of the process of negotiations.

However, we would also like to put it on record that the context under which we voted in favour of these terms in 2008 during our first term on the Security Council was underpinned by South Africa’s approach to having a constructive text that would bring the sides together. Today, these terms have been taken out of context, and we cannot support the distortion in their application that we have seen in recent years.

In its fourteenth preambular paragraph, resolution 2548 (2020) continues to welcome Morocco’s “serious and credible Moroccan efforts to move the process forward towards resolution”. The context and relevance of retaining this phrase has changed. Unfortunately, this phrase has led to destructive ambiguity and resulted in some regrettably interpreting the Council’s intention as favouring one proposal over the other.

My delegation reiterates its understanding that, based on South Africa’s having been a member of the Security Council that was part of the negotiations on the text of resolution 1754 (2007), the text of that resolution in which the Council “tak[es] note” of both proposals and where it calls on the parties to enter into negotiations based on both proposals is clear. Any attempt to place one proposal over the other would undermine the negotiations process and be counter-productive to the spirit of future negotiations based on the two proposals. Further to this point, this part of the

text of resolution 2548 (2020) blatantly ignores the efforts of the Frente POLISARIO and fails to present the facts by omitting an accurate chronological description of the parties' efforts; this language can easily be interpreted as showing bias towards one party over another. Additionally, it is unclear as to why the facts should be presented in this manner. The Council and the incoming Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General should remain objective without pre-empting any final status of the negotiations.

Of grave concern to South Africa is the fact that not all resolutions of the Security Council pertaining to Western Sahara are being acknowledged. It would appear that only resolutions from 2007 onwards are acknowledged, which sets a negative precedent as it sends a message that any resolution before 2007 is irrelevant when, in fact, we are bound by all Council outcomes on this matter.

On human rights, we note that, in the seventeenth preambular paragraph of resolution 2548 (2020), the text indicates the Council stresses

“the importance of improving the human rights situation in Western Sahara and the Tindouf camps, and encourag[es] the parties to work with the international community to develop and implement independent and credible measures to ensure full respect for human rights, bearing in mind their relevant obligations under international law”.

However, there is still no explicit reference or responsibility given to MINURSO to, in its work, monitor the human rights situation on the ground. A human rights monitoring mandate for United Nations missions has become almost standard. It is therefore of concern that this mechanism has once again been rejected in Western Sahara. That having been said, resolution 2548 (2020) does call on the parties, Frente POLISARIO and Morocco, to continue with the negotiations, which we acknowledge.

South Africa once again proposes that the Security Council visit the occupied territory, as it did in 1995, to assess the situation on the ground in an effort to break the current political impasse among the parties. Keeping in mind the limitations imposed by the pandemic, the Security Council should consider a virtual visit, and, should the pandemic subside and safety regulations related to travel permit, we should look into the possibility of physically visiting Western Sahara in future. Notwithstanding the many other African issues on the Council's agenda, Western Sahara requires the Council's attention and should not be treated any different from them. In this regard, we propose that, just as the Security Council engages with the African Union on other issues on the Council's agenda, there be more formal coordination with the African Union on Western Sahara.

It is for the reasons I have just outlined that South Africa abstained in the voting on the resolution. Going forward, we appeal to the Council to review its working methods and conduct its business in a transparent and impartial manner, as the way it approached this issue undermines the Council's ability to meaningfully effect change on the ground and move towards the resolution of this long-standing matter.

In conclusion, South Africa appeals to the Secretary-General to urgently appoint a Personal Envoy to advance a political process that has been stagnant for far too long. To the parties to the conflict, namely, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Frente POLISARIO, we urge that they engage in a direct and substantive dialogue that can pave the way towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political resolution of this matter.

Annex 24**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, Kelly Craft**

The United States commends the Security Council for affirming its support for the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) with today's mandate renewal. While we share fellow Council members' frustration with the lack of progress on the political front, we would like to highlight the importance of the daily work of the peacekeepers. In renewing MINURSO's mandate, the Council is recognizing the success of this mission in de-escalating tensions and maintaining overall calm, conducting dangerous mine-clearance operations, supporting humanitarian efforts and preventing the spread of coronavirus disease.

The Council will not overlook its responsibility for ensuring progress towards a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution. We remain concerned with the prolonged absence of a Personal Envoy. It has been almost a year and a half since former Personal Envoy Köhler's departure, and the vacancy has contributed to the lack of progress towards a political solution. We urge the Secretary-General to fill this position soon.

We view Morocco's autonomy plan as serious, credible and realistic, and it represents one potential approach to satisfying the aspirations of the people in Western Sahara to run their own affairs with peace and dignity. We call on the parties to demonstrate their commitment to a realistic, practicable and enduring political solution based on compromise by resuming negotiations without preconditions and in good faith. Entrenched positions must not stand in the way of progress.

In the meantime, we expect that all parties will respect their obligations under the ceasefire, cooperate fully with MINURSO and refrain from any actions that could destabilize the situation or threaten the United Nations process. We call for all parties to exercise restraint, particularly in the light of recent events in Guerguerat — which pose a threat to peace and stability in the region — and the general increase in violations highlighted in the most recent report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/938). Moreover, unilateral changes to the status quo on the ground will not help us get to a lasting and peaceful solution.

The mandate renewal embodied in resolution 2548 (2020) affirms our confidence not only in the peacekeepers, but also in the Mission's current leadership. We strongly urge the parties to meet with Special Representative of the Secretary-General Colin Stewart and cooperate with him, his staff and the entire MINURSO team.

Annex 25**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Viet Nam to the United Nations, Dinh Quy Dang**

Western Sahara is currently facing a complicated and fragile situation in combination with a lot of challenges. The presence of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) would continue to help address these issues on the ground, prevent an escalation of tension and facilitate talks among relevant parties. We therefore voted in favour of resolution 2548 (2020), on the renewal of MINURSO's mandate.

We would like to highlight the following points.

First, it is necessary for MINURSO to improve its effectiveness and efficiency to cope with demanding requirements and challenges, especially the coronavirus disease pandemic. We stress the importance of upholding and implementing the Security Council's mandate in earnest and of considering the legitimate views of concerned parties with a balanced and impartial approach.

Secondly, we would like to reaffirm our principled position on the situation concerning Western Sahara. Viet Nam supports solving the Western Sahara issue through peace talks among directly concerned parties based on international law and relevant long-standing United Nations resolutions. We also emphasize the need to find a just, lasting and mutually acceptable solution that ensures the right to self-determination of the people of Western Sahara, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in favour of peace, cooperation and development in the region.

Thirdly, MINURSO should continue to play a crucial role as an essential instrument in the maintenance of peace and security in Western Sahara. We reiterate our support for the efforts of the United Nations and MINURSO in promoting the political process in Western Sahara and maintaining stability in the region. We emphasize the primary role that the United Nations plays in resolving the issue through mediation, conflict prevention and implementation of confidence-building measures. Moreover, we join other members in reiterating the Council's call upon all parties to cooperate fully with MINURSO and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Last but not least, in order to facilitate that role and accelerate talks among the relevant parties, it is also important that the views and legitimate concerns of Security Council members be taken into account when the Council discusses the situation concerning Western Sahara, including the renewal of the mandate of MINURSO.
