



Security Council

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Letter dated 27 November 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 enclose herewith a copy of a briefing provided by Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, as well as the statements delivered by the representatives of Belgium, China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-teleconference on “The situation concerning Iraq” convened on Tuesday, 24 November 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Iraq.

In accordance with the procedure set out in the letter by the President of the Security Council addressed to permanent representatives of the members of the Security Council dated 7 May 2020 (S/2020/372), which was agreed in the light of the extraordinary circumstances caused by the coronavirus disease pandemic, this briefing and these statements will be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Inga Rhonda **King**
President of the Security Council



Annex I**Briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Iraq, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert**

In my previous briefing to the Security Council (S/2020/845, annex 1), I stated that the Government of Iraq is operating in the eye of multiple storms at once. From the outset, I would like to emphasize that this very much remains the case.

Concerning the pandemic and its impact, several distinct, yet interlinked and mutually reinforcing, crises — on the political, security, economic, financial, social and, of course, sanitary fronts — continue to force the hand of the Government, pressing it into a reactive, crisis-management mode. And, while all of us hope for the beginning of a global recovery from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, it is clear that its devastating effects can unfortunately be expected to last.

The financial and economic situation in Iraq remains troubling, to say the least. The economy is projected to contract by nearly 10 per cent this year. The impact of the pandemic has wreaked further havoc on already extremely weak private sector activity, and oil prices continue their extended slump, exerting downward pressure on the gross domestic product and domestic revenue.

In mid-October, a long-awaited economic white paper was released. That important document provides a very useful overview of the structural imbalances that characterize the Iraqi economy. It also describes a variety of much-needed reform measures and acknowledges numerous opportunities that have been squandered since 2003. But while very few would dispute the urgency of steering Iraq towards economic recovery and resilience, we are left wanting on how and when that may be achieved. To put it a bit more bluntly, we are left wanting on the political game plan.

One thing is clear: without broad political consensus to transform the white paper into reality, it risks remaining just words on a page. But let me emphasize that serious, resolute measures to address the ongoing financial and economic crisis cannot wait, not for a day. The Government, Parliament, political parties and others will have to step up to the plate collectively.

With elections looming, I can only hope that urgently needed reforms, including some very painful ones, will not be swept under the carpet. That would only worsen Iraq's situation, and thereby sooner or later fuel social unrest. In other words, I very much hope that political leaders will resist the temptation to use the electoral calendar as a reason not to deliver.

In the meantime, the Iraqi Government has seen it necessary to resort to borrowing in order to meet its obligations for the remainder of 2020, including for the payment of public-sector salaries. The original borrowing law, as proposed by the Minister of Finance, had a clear objective, which was to create fiscal space to implement reforms — the reforms needed to diversify Iraq's economy and reduce its dependence on oil; the reforms needed to boost economic opportunities while advancing sustainable development; and the reforms needed to meet the aspirations of the many Iraqis who took to the streets. However, the law, as actually amended and adopted by Parliament, significantly limits the Government's room for manoeuvre. One therefore must ask whether the ends justify the means.

In addition, we must constantly be reminded of the fundamental importance of fighting corruption, while preserving fundamental rights in the process. In other words, any effort to reform Iraq's economy must be accompanied by improved governance and transparency. The prevalence of *muhassassa*, patronage and clientelism also continues to hinder progress in Iraq. That too must urgently be

tackled. Otherwise public resources — indeed the hopes and aspirations of the people of Iraq — will continue to be looted.

Moreover, the fight against the scourge of corruption and the quest for more sustainable, inclusive forms of economic development and growth and for dignified employment are not just economic necessities. As I have said before, they are ultimately the best devices in any peace and security toolkit, as they provide lasting solutions to unrest and conflict, building domestic resilience to replace constant crisis management. At the end of the day, domestic resilience is the best defence against any form of external interference.

Iraqis recently marked the one-year anniversary of the protests that began in October 2019, which were a powerful expression of solidarity and patriotism by Iraqis who demand justice and wish to build a more stable, prosperous homeland and a moment to remember the brave souls lost. I truly hope that their shared determination to achieve a better future continues to inspire and guide Iraq's leaders.

As I have done many times before, I also wish to emphasize that the right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly must be defended at every turn throughout Iraq. The current drastically reduced levels of violence are indeed encouraging, but Iraq's reality remains harsh, with enforced disappearances and assassinations continuing to play a part in that reality. In this context, I would like to underline once again the pressing need for justice and accountability. A fact-finding committee has now been activated. However, it has not yet resulted in a swift end to perceived impunity.

With regard to the June 2021 elections, I would like to recall the wise words of Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani. In my meeting with him in mid-September, His Eminence made it clear that the early elections, if properly conducted, could provide a peaceful path out of the ongoing suffering of the country. His Eminence emphasized the importance of voting freely, without any pressure, and underlined the need for integrity, transparency and observation.

I am pleased to report that Parliament recently finalized necessary electoral legislation, and, in line with mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), we are now ramping up our technical assistance.

Iraq's electoral institutional capacity can and must be strengthened. We therefore ask and expect the relevant authorities to step up and think in terms of solutions instead of obstacles. Late last week, the Iraqi Government sent a letter to the Security Council with a request

“to obtain more support, technical assistance and electoral observation within the framework of UNAMI support to Iraq”.

In a press conference, the Minister for Foreign Affairs explained the request and emphasized the need to rebuild public trust and to promote participation.

I wish to underline yet once again that under all circumstances the elections will be Iraqi-owned and Iraqi-led. Indeed, the responsibility for credible elections lies not only with the Iraqi authorities, but with all Iraqi electoral stakeholders, all political actors and all Iraqi citizens, who are called upon to play a greater role in the public sphere. Animated by a patriotic desire to better their country, the people of Iraq, in particular women and the youth, can seize this opportunity to make their voices heard, as voters or as candidates.

Let me also use today's briefing to reaffirm in the clearest of terms that electoral preparations must remain free from political interference at all stages.

With regard to domestic and external armed groups and spoilers, while we welcome the decrease in attacks on diplomatic missions in recent weeks, the deplorable rocket attacks on 17 November are another stark reminder of the fact that much work remains to be done, including the hard work of broad, meaningful dialogue.

For a variety of reasons, the coming months will be a delicate and crucial period. It should be understood that any form of misinformation — all kinds of conspiracies and/or a perceived lack of transparency or commitment — could lead to regrettable and most counterproductive miscalculations.

Meanwhile, Iraq's leadership continues to assert its independence and sovereignty, seeking to maintain all channels of communication open, as it builds a foreign policy that serves Iraq's national interests. The centrality of Iraq in building regional stability is a fact. It also bears repeating that Iraq must be shielded from foreign power rivalries and that Iraqis must be given room to focus on their strength at home.

With regard to the relations between Baghdad and Erbil, all of us will agree that a positive and constructive relationship between federal Iraq and the Kurdistan region is key to the stability of the whole country. However, the recent vote in Parliament on the borrowing law has shown us once again how brittle the relationship is.

Let us be reminded that it takes two to tango. We expect both parties to keep their side of the bargain. We expect both parties to demonstrate transparency — be it on revenue management or on countless other contentious issues. It should be clear, however, that a Kurdish region public servant is not only a Kurdish region public servant, but also an Iraqi citizen. The payment of public civil servants should be shielded from political disputes. They cannot and should not be collectively victimized. A solution is urgent, and political will to find a way out will once again prove essential.

As I emphasized during my most recent briefing, constructive negotiations between Baghdad and Erbil are hampered by unclear constitutional guidance, and unfortunately that ambiguity is taking a daily toll on the numerous outstanding issues. In the past 15 years, many opportunities to arrive at a clear set of principles, rules and guidelines have been wasted, but agreement must now urgently be found on how to enhance the federal system.

It is true that, with many other pressing issues on their plate, Iraq's leaders and politicians may be tempted to ignore that issue, which would be the easy way out. However, the bitter truth is that, as long as no lasting solutions are found, the relationship will not get any better. The opposite will be the case.

The desire of the Iraqi Government to rapidly resolve internal displacement is both understandable and justified. However, in the absence of sufficient durable solutions, serious concerns around the planning and implementation of camp closures and consolidation have come to the fore in recent weeks. While we fully understand that the Iraqi authorities are working under tremendous time pressure, it must be clear that camp closures should not lead to another crisis — for instance, in the form of secondary displacement, which is already occurring.

In coordination with the Iraqi authorities, we continue our work on a joint durable solutions plan, while at the same time extending life-saving services to internally displaced persons, who are unable to find safe and affordable accommodation.

With regard to Sinjar, a hard-won agreement was signed between Baghdad and Erbil in early October. It is an important agreement, as it could pave the way for a new chapter for Sinjar and all Sinjaris. It represents a chapter in which the interests of the Sinjari people will come first, reconstruction will be accelerated, public service delivery will be improved and displaced Sinjaris will be able to return home.

Admittedly, signing off on such an agreement is just a very first step. As I emphasized to all stakeholders and Sinjari representatives during a joint meeting in Mosul last week, swift, decisive and well-coordinated implementation will now prove essential. Stable security structures are the number-one priority, followed by a unified administration.

I will now turn to the issue of missing Kuwaiti, third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. Despite the difficult circumstances imposed by the pandemic, I am pleased to report that, under the aegis of the International Committee of the Red Cross with the assistance of UNAMI, on 16 September the Government of Iraq handed over to Kuwait the remains of 20 persons exhumed from a mass grave site in southern Iraq last January. That step marks Iraq's continuous commitment to bring the humanitarian file to a close.

Another important development took place two days ago. The Kuwaiti authorities publicly confirmed the identification of the human remains of seven persons as Kuwaiti missing nationals, thereby hopefully bringing some closure to their families.

In conclusion, I would like to call for continued solidarity with the people of Iraq. Of course, with the ongoing global pandemic, the many challenges faced by all nations are well understood, and it may be easy to lose sight of Iraqis' hopes and dreams at this critical juncture in their modern history. But if the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that local problems hardly ever remain local, and that domestic trouble rapidly translates into trouble abroad. In other words, the continued support of the Council is vital and much appreciated.

Annex II**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations, Karen Van Vlierberge**

[Original: French]

First of all, I thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her briefing.

The new Iraqi Government has made the holding of early elections one of its top priorities. We welcome all efforts by political actors to ensure that the 6 June elections will be credible, fair, free and inclusive. We take note of the progress made in recent months, in particular the recent signing of the electoral framework by President Salih.

We welcome UNAMI's commitment to provide electoral assistance to the Government of Iraq and, in accordance with its mandate, further develop its electoral assistance with the Independent High Electoral Commission. The holding of fair, free and inclusive elections can pave the way towards achieving a more stable and democratic Iraq. In that regard, Belgium once again stresses the importance of the full, active and meaningful participation of women in this context.

When Belgium joined the Security Council two years ago, Iraq was already at a crossroads. The political, economic and security challenges remain enormous. There is an urgent need to make tangible progress in those areas. Continued strong political leadership is required. As a State member of the European Union, Belgium remains committed to helping overcome those multiple challenges.

First, the Iraqi economy remains highly dependent on oil exports. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has further exacerbated an already disastrous economic situation. We support the Iraqi Government in its efforts to diversify and support economic development, increase private-sector engagement, implement administrative reforms and fight corruption. We welcome the recent adoption of the white paper by the Council of Ministers.

Secondly, human rights and fundamental freedoms must be respected at all times. The Government's progress on compensating the victims of the violence committed during the demonstrations that began in October 2019 is a positive step. However, we call on the Government to continue to support the most vulnerable people, including internally displaced persons. All camp closures must be preceded by, and carried out with, sufficient notice and in full consultation with the representatives of the displaced persons and humanitarian agencies.

The return of displaced persons should be safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable. We call on the Iraqi Government to work closely with international partners, including the relevant United Nations agencies. The distribution of humanitarian aid should always be carried out in full compliance with humanitarian principles.

Thirdly, my country encourages the parties to implement the Sinjar agreement, which was facilitated by UNAMI. Although many questions remain, this will be an important test for building mutual trust. We call on the parties to capitalize on this momentum to resolve other outstanding issues, including the discussions under way on oil revenues. The Iraqi people deserve a political consensus to resolve the economic impact of COVID-19.

Fourthly, we note with concern that, despite the military defeat of Da'esh in Iraq, the group continues to operate as a clandestine network and to carry out attacks. We renew our commitment to combating terrorism as part of the international coalition against Da'esh in collaboration with the Iraqi Government.

We are concerned about the continued violence, including the rocket attacks on the Green Zone last week, for which the Ashab Al-Kahf militia claimed responsibility. We encourage the Iraqi Government to continue security sector reform. Armed non-State actors should not be allowed to operate outside of State control.

Furthermore, as Iraq opens up to neighbouring countries, with a view to strengthening bilateral and regional relations, the fundamental principles of respect for sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity must be respected.

Lastly, Iraqi children deserve a future. They deserve to live in security and prosperity. My country once again underscores its support for the Government of Iraq in addressing its many remaining challenges.

Annex III**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Geng Shuang**

[Original: English and Chinese]

China thanks Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and welcomes the Permanent Representative of Iraq at today's meeting.

Since the new Iraqi Government took office, it has achieved positive results in promoting political transition, preparing for early elections, meeting economic and social challenges and developing peaceful and friendly foreign relations. At the same time, it should be noted that the persistent turbulence in the region, the rampage unleashed by terrorist remnants and the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) have combined to raise severe challenges to the stability and development of Iraq. In connection with relevant reports of the Secretary-General and the briefing by the Special Representative, I wish to state the following.

First, with regard to supporting Iraq in advancing autonomously its domestic political processes, Iraq has set a goal of holding early elections in 2021, which is an important political agenda in Iraq. We are pleased with the steady progress of elections preparations and the entry into force of the new electoral law. We hope that the elections will be held without incident, thereby realizing the vision of the Iraqi people. The international community should create a favourable environment for this purpose, fully heed the views of Iraq and respect its ownership when providing assistance.

China welcomes the interim arrangement reached between the federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government on resource and revenue sharing and the agreement on the situation in Sinjar. It is hoped that the two sides will strengthen dialogue and cooperation and inject new momentum into consolidating national unity and accelerating integrated development.

Secondly, with regard to safeguarding the hard-won peace and stability, according to the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/1099), terrorist remnants have launched numerous attacks in Iraq, causing civilian casualties. The international community should continue to support the Iraqi side in carrying out counter-terrorism operations, combating terrorism, dealing with the issue of foreign terrorist fighters, bringing terrorists to justice in accordance with domestic laws and preventing the return and spread of terrorist forces and activities.

Peace and development cannot be achieved in Iraq in the absence of a stable neighbourhood. China commends Iraqi efforts to develop friendly and mutually beneficial relations with countries in the region. We hope that all parties concerned will respond to the Secretary-General's appeal and resolve their differences through such peaceful means as dialogue and consultations so as to continuously enhance mutual trust and avoid the escalation of tensions. Any military actions on Iraqi territory must be subject to the consent of the Iraqi Government, and Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity should be fully respected.

We have taken note of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/1089) on the implementation of resolution 2107 (2013). We welcome the progress made both in the search for missing Kuwaiti nationals and in terms of Iraqi compensation. We encourage Iraq and Kuwait to further deepen cooperation pertaining to missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the national archives.

Thirdly, with regard to taking a people-centred approach to promoting sustainable economic and social development, the important tasks for Iraq are to

deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, speed up national reconstruction and improve the economic and humanitarian situation. The new Iraqi Government has responded positively to people's demands by prioritizing economic reform, improving people's livelihoods, addressing the pandemic and combating corruption, which we appreciate.

The international community should encourage Iraq to explore a development path suited to its national conditions, help it fight the pandemic, rebuild key infrastructure, achieve economic diversification, strengthen capacity-building, protect vulnerable groups, such as women and children, and promote peace through development.

As always, China firmly supports Iraq in safeguarding its national sovereignty, security and stability and is helping with Iraq's economic and social development through practical cooperation, exemplified by the Belt and Road Initiative. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, we lost no time in dispatching medical experts and donating medical supplies to Iraq to combat the epidemic. China will continue to work with the international community to contribute to achieving lasting peace, prosperity and development in Iraq.

Annex IV**Statement by the Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations**

[Original: Spanish]

We thank Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and the commendable work she is doing with her team as Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

First, we welcome the steps taken by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi to move forward the political process and hold elections in June 2021, as well as his determination to ensure that they will be free, credible and fair. To that end, the electoral assistance provided by UNAMI is imperative.

We hope that the House of Representatives will soon reach consensus on the finalization of the electoral law and that the corresponding budget will be set up in a manner that facilitates the work of the Independent High Electoral Commission and allows for the development of the logistics for organizing early elections.

We welcome the Government's plans to adopt a national development plan to encourage women to hold high-level decision-making positions. We also welcome the fact that the Government intends to adopt a law against domestic violence, given the considerable increase in the number of related cases during the coronavirus disease pandemic.

We applaud the advocacy initiative between United Nations agencies and Iraqi Ministries to ensure that school-age children have access to education, without restrictions, given the high percentage of them who have met with myriad challenges in enrolling or advancing to the next level due to the lack of documentation.

With regard to security, we are particularly concerned about escalating regional tensions with a direct impact on Iraq. We reiterate our call on the parties to show restraint and resolve differences through dialogue. At the same time, all States must respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and airspace of Iraq and refrain from using Iraqi territory as a stage for confrontation.

With respect to human rights, we strongly condemn the targeted killings of human rights defenders during the month of August, the violence against activists and protesters and the arbitrary arrests of journalists. We therefore continue to call on the authorities to respect freedom of expression and the right to peaceful demonstration.

Despite the initial steps taken by the Government, which we support, there is a need for greater efforts by the population to ensure accountability. Impunity significantly undermines efforts to achieve peace and restore public confidence in the authorities. Therefore, the demand that cases of violence be thoroughly investigated so that the perpetrators are brought to justice cannot fall on deaf ears.

We also deplore the increase in the number of terrorist attacks perpetrated by the Islamic State in various parts of the country, as well as the various attacks on diplomatic missions. Efforts to combat terrorism cannot be allowed to wane. We continue to encourage the international community to strengthen cooperation in this regard.

With regard to the issue of missing Kuwaiti nationals and property, we welcome the recent progress made by the members of the Tripartite Mechanism that led to the formal handover by Iraqi authorities of the human remains of alleged Kuwaiti nationals. We acknowledge the commitment of the Iraqi Government and

encourage the parties to continue to strengthen collaboration and cooperation until this issue — one of great importance to the people of Kuwait and the families of the missing — is resolved.

In conclusion, we welcome the commitment of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi to addressing Iraq's economic, social and political challenges and the measures taken to combat corruption, terrorism and the health crisis. We hope that, with the assistance of UNAMI, the strengthening of relations at the regional and international levels and, above all, national reconciliation among political actors, Iraq will open the door to the development, peace and security sought by its people.

Annex V**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Estonia to the United Nations, Sven Jürgenson**

I would like to thank Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing.

Estonia supports the Iraqi Government in addressing the political, security and economic challenges that the country is facing. We also stress the need to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and call on all actors to refrain from military action, which would threaten the stability of Iraq.

We welcomed the announcement of early parliamentary elections to take place in June 2021. The recent ratification of the new electoral law was an important development in the preparations and is a precondition for conducting free and fair elections. The continued support and technical assistance of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq is of critical importance.

We acknowledge the multiple steps the Iraqi Government has already taken towards the implementation of structural reforms. We also call the Government to implement urgently needed economic reforms, including those proposed in the Government's white paper.

The establishment of a permanent committee to investigate corruption is an essential step in countering corruption and enforcing the rule of law. Furthermore, additional measures to bring all armed forces under State control are necessary to increase stability in Iraq.

We commend the Iraqi Government's announcement of its intention to adopt a national development plan for women, as it exhibits the commitment of the Government to advancing women's political, economic and social empowerment and participation.

The Government's efforts to combat the coronavirus disease are welcome and we, the international community, have to support these efforts where that support is most needed. However, more attention should be paid to the impact of the crisis on vulnerable people, including women and children, who continue to be the most affected.

It is a positive development that the number of attacks on demonstrators has decreased. However, it is worrisome that targeted killings of protesters have continued, as well as violations of freedom of expression, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests and detentions of journalists and civil society activists. We urge the Iraqi Government to ensure the protection of human rights, including freedom of expression and assembly, and to take concrete steps to hold perpetrators to account.

The continued support to Iraq in its fight to counter terrorism is of the utmost importance. However, we would like to urge the Iraqi Government to halt the execution of prisoners under the anti-terrorism law.

Finally, we commend the Iraqi Government's efforts in preventing missile attacks on diplomatic missions and personnel. However, we remain concerned about the continued attacks by Shia militias.

Annex VI

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Nathalie Broadhurst Estival

[Original: English and French]

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for her briefing. The Special Representative has the full support of France. I would like to commend the outstanding work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) under her leadership, as well as that of the entire United Nations family in Iraq. Today I would like to address three points.

First of all, I would like to express France's support for the Government of Iraq, led by Mr. Al-Kadhimi, as the President of the French Republic did during his visit to Iraq in September and again during the Iraqi Prime Minister's visit to Paris in October. Together with the Iraqi Government, we will continue our efforts to mobilize the country's regional and international partners in support of an initiative to strengthen its stability and security.

The Iraqi authorities conduct very ambitious reforms in a context made even more difficult by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. As the Special Representative said, these reforms are essential to meeting the legitimate aspirations of Iraqis by modernizing the economy, reforming the Administration, strengthening the protection of human rights and remaining steadfast in the fight against corruption.

We welcome the announcement of early elections in June 2021. UNAMI's support to the Iraqi authorities and the Independent High Electoral Commission in the organization of these elections is extremely valuable in ensuring free and transparent elections. The participation of all groups in society, in particular young people and women, will be crucial in building the democratic future of the country. France will contribute €1 million to fund UNAMI activities in this area. We encourage the entire international community to work to ensure smooth elections and full confidence in the electoral process.

We also welcome progress in the dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil. The Sinjar agreement is very promising in this regard. The health projects we endorse in the region will also foster support for this movement to the benefit of the population.

Despite the promising announcements and progress on the ground, we remain concerned about the attacks targeting demonstrators, members of civil society, human rights defenders and journalists. It is imperative that the perpetrators be prosecuted, as trust cannot be built without justice.

My second point concerns security challenges in Iraq. Terrorism ranks first and is our common challenge. The fight against Da'esh is not over. The international coalition's military contribution in support of the Iraqi authorities remains crucial, and its operational modalities can be adapted to the changing threat. The work of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is essential in combating impunity.

It is also crucial that the Iraqi State maintains its monopoly on use of force in the country. The action of certain armed groups is very worrisome, in particular the unacceptable attacks on diplomatic missions. We welcome the efforts of the Iraqi Government to stop them.

In that context, it is all the more crucial to ensure that Iraq remain unaffected by regional tensions and that its sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected. We therefore welcome the Iraqi Government's strong commitment to balanced

and good-neighbourly diplomacy. The recent progress in the return of remains of Kuwaiti and third-country nationals is a testament to that. It is important that those actions continue.

Lastly, and this is my third point, I would like to say a word about the humanitarian situation. Every effort must be made to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need of assistance in Iraq. I refer in particular of the hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, who must be able to continue receiving assistance when they leave the camps. Camp closures must be implemented in a coordinated manner and accompanied by a concrete plan to support the return of people. This is all the more crucial as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to spread in the country at an extremely worrisome rate.

Vaccination campaigns must scale up, given that the pandemic has led to a 20 per cent to 30 per cent decrease in vaccination rates in the country. We have a collective responsibility in this regard to prevent avoidable outbreaks of polio or measles.

As mentioned by the Special Representative, there are many challenges. But France is determined to stand with Iraq at this important time in its history.

Annex VII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Günter Sautter

Germany reiterates its support for the Government of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi and his Government have the right intentions and are seeking to address the legitimate demands of the Iraqi people. We acknowledge the measures that have been undertaken so far and call upon the Iraqi Government to continue along the path of substantial reforms. Together with the European Union, Germany stands ready to support the Iraqi-led economic reform process as co-Chair of the Iraqi Economic Contact Group over the course of the next six months.

We have taken note of the request of the Iraqi Government to strengthen the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) with regard to the upcoming early elections. We welcome UNAMI's support, advice and technical assistance to Iraq in the field of electoral preparations. Germany will contribute a total of €6 million to UNAMI's effort, including to strengthen the capacity of the Independent High Electoral Commission. In addition, we would welcome UNAMI or United Nations engagement to conduct electoral observation. It is essential that elections be held in a free, fair, inclusive and transparent manner in order to ensure their integrity, credibility and legitimacy.

We remain deeply concerned about reports of ongoing arrests, forced disappearances and acts of violence and intimidation against protesters, civil society activists, human rights defenders and journalists. We urge the Iraqi Government to ensure the protection of all peaceful protesters, civil society activists and human rights defenders and their fundamental rights and reiterate the importance of concrete steps to provide accountability for violence, crimes and human rights violations.

We are concerned about the short-notice consolidation and closure of camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), which precluded necessary consultations with key stakeholders and risks leading to secondary displacement. We are committed to working with the Government of Iraq to ensure durable solutions for IDPs. We stand ready to work with the Government of Iraq and the United Nations towards facilitating returns and ensuring the safe, dignified, voluntary, informed and sustainable movement of all IDPs.

We support the call of the Secretary-General with regard to Baghdad and Erbil to step up mutual dialogue efforts in order to reach a long-term sustainable agreement on all outstanding issues, including natural resources, revenue-sharing and security arrangements.

We remain concerned about the impact of regional tensions on Iraq and call for continued de-escalation and restraint by all regional and international actors. All differences must be resolved through diplomatic means. Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity must be respected by all its neighbours, as well as by regional and international partners. Iraq should neither be dragged into nor become an area for regional confrontation.

At the same time, it is essential that the continued attacks against diplomatic missions and personnel cease immediately and that the State strengthen its control over all weapons in the country.

As the fight against terrorism, namely, the so-called Islamic State, is not over, cooperation between the Government of Iraq and its international partners must continue. Otherwise, both Iraq and the international community will face a higher risk of a resurgence of the so-called Islamic State.

In this context, we are alarmed by reports of renewed mass executions of individuals convicted of terrorism-related crimes. While we condemn in the strongest terms the criminal actions for which these individuals were sentenced and express our sincere condolences to all victims and their families, we oppose the use of capital punishment under any circumstances. We call on Iraqi authorities to refrain from any future executions, declare a de facto moratorium on the use of capital punishment and pursue a consistent policy towards the abolition of the death penalty.

In conclusion, we welcome the ongoing cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait in the search for missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, which enabled the most recent progress. We encourage the Government of Iraq to continue its efforts to resolve all outstanding issues.

Annex VIII

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Indonesia to the United Nations, Muhsin Syihab

Let me begin by thanking Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her update.

My delegation recognizes that challenges persist on the journey to stability and prosperity in Iraq, but with the determination of all stakeholders and the support of the international community, including the United Nations, Iraq is on the right path. I would now like to underscore the following points.

First, free, fair and credible elections, along with reform efforts, are non-negotiable. Indonesia welcomes the serious preparations to hold credible elections and the affirmation of that prospect by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi. This must be a collective effort by all stakeholders, including the Government, the Independent High Electoral Commission, the judiciary, parliamentarians and the technical assistance of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

We further underline the continuation of the Government's reform agenda, in the determination to fulfil the demands and expectations of the people and improve basic services. However, we recognize that the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) impinges on the Government's efforts on many fronts. We hope that the support of UNAMI will make a difference in the days ahead.

Secondly, maintaining stability and security is a prerequisite for sustainable development. We are concerned that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant continues to launch violent attacks against civilians and diplomatic premises. It must be clear to all that investment and sustainable development will flourish only in a stable and secure country.

Another critical element in the pursuit of a stable and secure Iraq is the support of all countries, regionally and globally. In this regard, Indonesia calls for greater cooperation in countering terrorism, in accordance with international law and with full respect for Iraqi sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Indonesia reaffirms its support to the Government in reforming the security sector and establishing stronger ties with its regional and strategic partners. Iraq's spirit of good neighbourliness should be reciprocated by its neighbours, as another hotspot in the Middle East will benefit no one.

Thirdly, progress on the issue of missing Kuwaiti nationals and archives should continue. We are delighted that, despite the challenge to the Tripartite Mechanism posed by COVID-19, progress has been made, as the repatriation of human remains by the Government of Iraq to the Government of Kuwait on 16 September attests. Indonesia commends the efforts made by the Government of Iraq and continued cooperation between both countries on this issue.

The roles of UNAMI and International Committee of the Red Cross are also significant and should be commended. We hope that the Kuwaiti forensic team can complete the identification of human remains to bring closure to the families of the missing. We are confident that, with the determination of all, greater progress will be achieved.

In conclusion, the Security Council is united in supporting the people of Iraq and all stakeholders in achieving their long-awaited dream of a stable, secure and prosperous Iraq. This will be of advantage not only to Iraq, but to the region and rest of the world.

Today is Indonesia's last meeting in the Security Council on the situation in Iraq. I therefore take this opportunity to encourage greater efforts and success on this issue in future. I pledge Indonesia's unwavering support to Iraqi unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and to the Iraqi people, Government and UNAMI.

Annex IX**Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Niger to the United Nations, Abdou Abarry**

[Original: French]

I would like to thank Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her excellent briefing and her team's hard work in a complex environment. I would also like to welcome the representative of Iraq to today's meeting.

Iraq is attempting to rebuild after years of conflict in a very complex environment that has led to many internal crises, including the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, whose spread is increasing at an alarming rate. My delegation acknowledges the efforts of the Iraqi Government to meet these challenges and implement reforms, including in the fight against corruption, in order to steer the country towards a brighter future.

With respect to the protection of human rights, the Niger welcomes the progress made by the Iraqi Government in this area, although much remains to be done. We welcome the decision to compensate demonstrators who have been injured. However, the increase in the number of killings and attacks on human rights activists and defenders by unidentified armed assailants remains a cause for concern.

My delegation therefore calls on the Government to take concrete steps to honour its commitment by making operational the institution responsible for investigating the killings of activists and other human rights defenders and bringing perpetrators to justice. We believe that this will help ease tensions in the country and build trust between the Government and the people.

With regard to the electoral process, the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to the Independent High Electoral Commission remains paramount, in particular with regard to strengthening the operational and logistical capacities of the Commission. The same applies to the support of the international community and all of Iraq's regional and bilateral partners, with a view to ensuring free, fair and credible elections next year.

The Niger remains convinced that a sustainable process must include Iraqi women and young people. We therefore welcome the announcement made on 1 October by the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs concerning Government plans to adopt a national development plan that would complement existing legislation on increasing the number of women in high-level decision-making positions.

With regard to the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and the return of missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives, my delegation commends the action of the Iraqi Government on 16 September to repatriate human remains believed to be those of Kuwaiti citizens, despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. We commend UNAMI, the Tripartite Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross for their determined efforts to move this issue forward and for their logistical support.

In conclusion, I would like to recall here that, as Iraq attempts to recover from the deep crisis it has endured in recent years, we must not lose sight of the fact that a victory over the Islamic State in Iraq in the Levant is not synonymous with its elimination from the region. It is therefore ever more crucial for the global coalition against Da'esh and the United Nations to remain vigilant and continue to support Iraq in combating the terrorist hydra so as to thwart its hopes of re-emerging.

Annex X**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Anna Evstigneeva**

[Original: Russian]

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing.

We closely monitor the situation in Iraq. We welcome the Government's intention to hold free, equitable and fair elections on 6 June 2021. We hope that the Iraqi authorities will reach an agreement on the details of the electoral law in the near future. Ensuring consensus among the leading political forces on the matter remains an important part of the process.

Demonstrations demanding political and socioeconomic change are ongoing in Iraq. We commend the efforts of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi aimed at overcoming existing challenges, including the mobilization of resources to find a solution to the economic crisis, countering corruption, conducting administrative reforms, launching national dialogue at all levels and combating the coronavirus disease pandemic.

We are convinced that inclusive dialogue will help render it possible to find solutions to the remaining internal problems. In our contacts with all of Iraq's political forces, we have encouraged the search for compromise solutions. Against that backdrop, we urge all external players with interests in stabilizing the domestic situation in Iraq to refrain from taking steps that could negatively impact that process.

Countering terrorism is key to stabilizing the situation in the country. Despite Iraq's progress on the counter-terrorist front, the security situation in the country remains fragile. It is vital that all those involved in the fight against terrorism in Iraq remain committed to respecting the sovereignty of the Iraqi State and coordinate their actions with Baghdad.

We firmly believe that, if Baghdad and Erbil further improve their relations, Iraq will be better able to strengthen security and effectively harness its economic potential in the interests of the entire nation.

We support the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq. Its activities can have a positive impact on the reconciliation processes while supporting and respecting Iraq's sovereignty.

The efforts of Baghdad and Kuwait City to promptly resolve all outstanding issues in relation to the Iraqi-Kuwaiti file deserve our comprehensive support. Their commitment has been demonstrated by recent progress on both sides regarding the search and repatriation of the remains of Kuwaiti citizens.

We reiterate our coherent approach, according to which Iraq must not become an arena for regional confrontation. The country has the right to develop mutually beneficial relations with its neighbours. We commend Baghdad's fundamental position in favour of building good-neighbourly relations and its readiness to promote de-escalation in the region, which was clearly articulated during the Council meeting on the situation in the Persian Gulf region on 20 October (see S/2020/1037).

We call on the international community to engage in constructive cooperation in the interest of promoting peace and stability in the entire Middle East region, including on the basis of resolution 598 (1987). We believe that the Russian concept for security in the Persian Gulf, which proposes a collective approach to resolving issues in the region, remains pertinent.

Annex XI

Statement by the Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines to the United Nations, Inga Rhonda King

We extend our gratitude to Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her insightful briefing this morning.

First, we wish to join other Council members in condemning the attack that took place just north of Baghdad over the weekend. We offer our condolences to the Government and the people of Iraq for the lives lost.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses its support for the Government of Iraq as it prepares for early elections next year, and recognizes the supportive role played by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in that regard. We also welcome the Government's commitment to the empowerment of women and the advancement of their political, economic and social participation, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2020/1099).

The challenges of 2020 have left no one unscathed, but as leaders we have a responsibility to assist those more vulnerable than us, wherever we can, and assuage their suffering. In the context of Iraq, the plight of its citizens must remain a priority. That means that the perpetrators of attacks on civilians must be held accountable, including those responsible for attacks by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, which have resulted in numerous deaths and injuries. The targeted killings of members of civil society, including political and human rights activists, is unacceptable and must not be allowed to continue with impunity. It cannot be overstated that accountability is a critical tenet of peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic demands from us a coordinated response. It is not a threat that we can successfully tackle independently. In that regard, we recognize the role of the World Health Organization in assisting the Iraqi Government, including their donation of ambulances to ensure that persons in remote locations receive support.

We express concern over the impact that the virus has had on the people of Iraq, as well as on the economy and delivery of basic services. To that end, we recognize the United Nations country team's efforts, which led to the completion of the socioeconomic response plan for Iraq to bridge the gap between humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts. However, it is disheartening to read in the report of the Secretary-General that the humanitarian response plan and the COVID-19 fund remain insufficiently financed. We appeal to the international community to step up its efforts to assist the people of Iraq during these extraordinary times.

We conclude by welcoming the continued cooperation that has taken place between Iraq and Kuwait on the search for missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, particularly in the light of COVID-19-related challenges. We recognize the roles played by UNAMI and the International Committee of the Red Cross in supporting that process and encourage further endeavours towards resolving the issue.

Annex XII**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Xolisa Mabhongo**

We thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, for her briefing. South Africa supports and continues to have confidence in her efforts.

South Africa supports UNAMI's mandate to promote the strengthening of the Government of Iraq and its electoral processes. We look forward to the adoption of the election law by the House of Representatives ahead of the much-anticipated elections on 6 June 2021.

We support the drive for an inclusive Government that will bring together all diverse aspects of Iraqi society into its governance structures. National reconciliation and unity remain vital in avoiding future challenges stemming from shifting Government policies and actions. Domestic unity, cohesion and determination are urgently needed to build resilience against narrow partisan interests, foreign interference and criminal elements actively seeking to impede Iraq's stability.

South Africa is pleased to witness a significant breakthrough following the formation of the new Government headed by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, which pays special attention to improving public services and meeting the promises made to the people of Iraq.

South Africa continues to call for increased and improved cooperation between the national Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, including the finalization of resource- and revenue-sharing agreements.

South Africa supports UNAMI and the Government of Iraq in its post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts, which provide much-needed humanitarian assistance throughout the country, particularly during the coronavirus disease pandemic. The spread of the pandemic in Iraq has strained an already fragile health-care system.

Peace and security remain fundamental for Iraq to develop its infrastructure, grow its economy and provide basic services to all its citizens. In that regard, South Africa supports the consolidation of the Iraqi army's control over the entire territory and welcomes continued support for the efforts of the Government to eradicate the threat posed by Da'esh.

South Africa remains concerned that an increase in assaults signals a worrisome trend that Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is steadily re-emerging, which is a cause for both regional and global concern. We are pleased to learn that the Iraqi security authorities have launched a campaign to control unlicensed weapons in Baghdad and across the country's provinces. Iraqis should not have to live in an atmosphere of terror and intimidation.

South Africa is pleased to note that a number of leaders of the ISIL terrorist entity have been arrested. We are also pleased by the commendable efforts of the Government of Iraq to prevent missile attacks on diplomatic missions and the subsequent arrests of suspects, thereby holding them accountable by way of fair legal procedures. It is paramount to uphold standards of justice, accountability, integrity and transparency.

We are encouraged by the collaborative effort of both the Governments of Kuwait and Iraq to locate missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals, as well as missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. We urge both countries

to work together with the relevant United Nations institutions to resolve outstanding issues. We commend UNAMI for facilitating the transfer of the human remains exhumed from the Shaykhiyah site in the Iraqi Samawah desert to Kuwait by making available its air assets.

In conclusion, Iraq simply cannot and should not be an arena for conflict or a base point for any other country's strategy towards any of its neighbouring countries, as Iraq aims to be an active player on the path to peacebuilding, achieving stability and improving security opportunities. South Africa reiterates its support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and continues to support UNAMI in the implementation of its mandate.

We also continue to urge the United Nations and the Government of Iraq to consider utilizing the Peacebuilding Commission in order to make greater strides in rebuilding the country.

Annex XIII**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Tunisia to the United Nations**

[Original: Arabic]

At the outset, I would like to thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her valuable briefing and her ongoing efforts in support of Iraq.

Tunisia is closely following the positive developments in the political situation in Iraq, in particular the Government's continued efforts to enact reforms that meet the demands and fulfil the aspirations of the Iraqi people, as well as the progress made by the Government in preparing for the early elections that will take place on 6 June 2021.

While we acknowledge the importance Iraq attaches to completing the relevant legislation and to the enactment by the Council of Representatives of the electoral law, with a view to organizing free, fair, transparent and credible elections, we hope that the Security Council will respond to the Iraqi Government's desire to strengthen the role of UNAMI so that it may provide additional support and technical assistance and help to monitor the elections.

Tunisia welcomes the Iraqi Government's efforts to strengthen the role and participation of women in decision-making by adopting the National Development Plan for the Empowerment of Women, which will have a positive impact and make a valuable contribution to promoting national unity and stability.

Tunisia also notes with satisfaction the Iraqi Government's efforts to combat corruption and hold perpetrators accountable, including by establishing a permanent committee to investigate corruption and major crimes. We hope that work will continue to strengthen Iraqi sovereignty over border crossings, place all weapons under State control and complete the reintegration process.

Against the backdrop of these positive developments, my delegation welcomes the agreement between the Federal Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government on a temporary solution to budget transfers and encourages the parties to continue cooperating and to step up efforts to tackle existing challenges in order to reach a sustainable and long-term agreement on issues of common concern.

Tunisia reaffirms its commitment to the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, in line with the Charter of the United Nations, and calls for dialogue and cooperation to resolve border issues. My delegation also calls on the Iraqi Government to continue its efforts to ensure the protection of all diplomatic missions and diplomatic personnel in Iraq.

Iraq is in a difficult economic situation because of low oil prices, on the one hand, and the large expenditures associated with its war on terrorism, on the other. In that connection, we welcome the efforts to address the economic and financial crisis, and the economic reform measures that the Government has submitted to the Council of Representatives. We urge the international community to provide Iraq with the necessary assistance to overcome the challenges it is facing at this stage.

We express our concern about the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on the daily life of the Iraqi people and note the efforts made by Iraqi national institutions, in particular, the High Committee for Health and National Safety, to curb the spread of the epidemic and contain its effects. We also commend the United Nations and its specialized agencies on the role that they have played in supporting the Iraqi Government's efforts to respond to this pandemic.

With regard to Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations, Tunisia highly values the cooperation between the two States and their tireless efforts to consolidate it further. We applaud Iraq for its readiness to uphold its obligations, including with regard to the Kuwaiti archives and the search for missing persons. We are satisfied with the progress that has been made in that regard, and we hope that the effort will continue in the same spirit of cooperation and solidarity between the two countries.

Annex XIV**Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, James Roscoe**

I wish to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, for her briefing and for highlighting the significant challenges currently facing Iraq.

Indeed, Iraq faces a severe economic crisis. Economic reform will be critical in ensuring Iraq's future peace and prosperity and allowing Iraq to build back stronger from the coronavirus disease pandemic. We took note of the steps described by the Special Representative, and we underline the need for fast action from the Council of Representatives to ensure that economic reform delivers for the Iraqi people.

The international community stands alongside Iraq during these difficult times. At Iraq's invitation, the United Kingdom hosted the inaugural meeting of the Iraq Economic Contact Group in London earlier this year to deepen support for vital economic reform. We welcome the fact that the follow-up meeting is going to be taken forward by the European Union and Germany.

We also think that regional economic integration is key to economic development and stability. We therefore welcome Iraq's commitment to deepen trilateral coordination and cooperation with both Egypt and Jordan.

The United Kingdom remains supportive of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi and welcomes his commitment to holding free and fair elections in 2021, with the support of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). I think we should consider carefully how the United Nations can support the Government of Iraq's intention to hold credible elections in order to rebuild public trust and democracy and to promote participation.

The United Kingdom is encouraged by improvements in the relationship between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government, including the agreement for the Sinjar district in Ninawa governorate. That agreement offers the prospect of return for thousands of Yazidis. It is vital that all armed groups cooperate with its implementation and that both the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan region of Iraq help to restore services and economic livelihoods.

We welcome Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert's facilitation of dialogue on the Sinjar agreement and encourage continued United Nations support to help normalize the situation there. We urge Baghdad and Erbil to reach an agreement on a long-term solution regarding resource- and revenue-sharing.

We remain concerned about the security situation in Iraq. It is clear that Da'esh continues to pose a threat to the peace and security of Iraq. The United Kingdom, like other members of the global coalition against Da'esh, is committed to supporting Iraq and addressing that threat.

We also underline the need for dialogue and cooperation between Iraq and Turkey to combat terrorism and ensure regional security and protect civilians. It is unacceptable that militia attacks continue in Iraq, including in Baghdad and in Erbil. They have claimed Iraqi and international lives for too long and continue to pose a risk to Iraqis and diplomatic and military personnel. We acknowledge the efforts of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi to strengthen security measures so that Iraqi citizens and foreign personnel can live and work safely, but we urge the Iraqi Government to continue to make progress in this area.

We believe the Security Council to be united in our concern over the number of killings of members of civil society and political and human rights activists, and we call on the Government of Iraq to do all it can to prevent such killings and bring those who perpetrate them to justice.

Finally, we commend Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's commitment to compensate the families of the victims of violence against protesters. However, justice for victims is critical. We call on the Government of Iraq to ensure credible investigations into the violence and to ensure that those responsible are held to account.

The Special Representative touched on the issue today in her comments, but the Iraqi Government's commitment to resolving the file on Kuwait and third-country nationals pursuant to resolution 2107 (2013) is to be commended. We note the repatriation of human remains from the Government of Iraq to the Government of Kuwait that took place on 16 September. We welcome the continued bilateral Iraqi-Kuwaiti dialogue and cooperation, and we are grateful to Council members for their cooperation on the press statement that will be issued on the matter today.

I believe that the Council is united in its hope to see Iraq's political leaders, with the support of UNAMI, take forward significant reforms to address Iraq's challenging economic and security situation, deliver credible and transparent elections in 2021 and, ultimately, secure stability and prosperity for the people of Iraq.

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

I thank Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her valuable briefing, and I welcome the representative of Iraq to our meeting today.

We are delighted by the recent positive developments in Iraq following the formation of the new Government headed by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. We have witnessed progress in the Iraqi Government's delivery of its promises to combat corruption, reform the economy, provide basic services, strengthen control over border crossings and finalize the technical and legal requirements to proceed with the plan to hold early elections in June 2021. We believe the newly ratified election law is an important step that will help move the country in the right direction. The Security Council and the wider international community should encourage the Iraqis to build on those initial achievements and take more concrete steps forward.

We also commend the Iraqi leaders for their efforts in working with the Kurdistan Regional Government to tackle pending issues. We hope that the recent agreements between them will create a favourable environment for the return of displaced persons, the restoration of stability and the strengthening of trust and confidence. We believe that dialogue, solidarity and national harmony continue to be the key factors in solving the country's internal matters.

Regarding Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations, we are pleased with the ongoing cooperation between the relevant parties in the search for missing Kuwaitis and third-country nationals, despite the constraints resulting from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. The repatriation of human remains to Kuwait in September was a demonstration of their efforts and commitment. We encourage further efforts and cooperation to accelerate the process. We also urge the international community to continue to provide support for the work of the technical teams.

However, the challenges facing Iraq today remain profound. The security situation continues to be a grave concern. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant still poses a threat, and violent attacks occur in many places. Meanwhile, the surge of COVID-19 and its impact on the economy, the health-care system and humanitarian situation are alarming.

According to the World Bank, poverty in Iraq is estimated to increase in the short term by 7 to 14 percentage points. That means that 2.7 to 5.5 million Iraqis would become newly poor, in addition to the pre-crisis 6.9 million. Currently, 1.3 million people remain internally displaced across the country, and 1.77 million people are in a state of acute need of assistance.

In that context, the role of UNAMI and other United Nations agencies standing with Iraq has proved essential. The reports of the Secretary-General on UNAMI and the letter sent by the Government of Iraq to the Security Council last week demonstrate the need for the continuation of the Mission. We reiterate our support for UNAMI and United Nations agencies to continue with their mandate to help Iraq to overcome its ongoing difficulties. We call for continued and strengthened collaboration between United Nations teams and the Government of Iraq in coping with the country's political, economic and humanitarian challenges.

We also urge the international community to continue to stand beside Iraq, while providing support and fully respecting Iraq's political independence, unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The report of the Secretary-General

(S/2020/1099) mentions violations of Iraq's sovereignty, which is another major concern of the region and beyond.

To conclude, we strongly believe that, with the determination of the Government, the resilience of the Iraqi people and the support of international actors, Iraq will soon recover and thrive in the future that it deserves.

Annex XVI**Statement by the Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations**

At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to Ms. Inga Rhonda King, Permanent Representative of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, on her presidency of the Security Council during the month of November. I also extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Vassily Nebenzia, Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation, for his management of the Council's meetings last month.

I also extend my gratitude to Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), for her briefing.

Since the previous meeting on the situation in Iraq in August (see S/2020/845), there have been no significant changes in terms of the huge and complex challenges that Iraq is facing. Those challenges are interconnected in nature across various fields, including economic, security, health and social — however, our willingness to deal with them is greater. The Government is expeditiously working at the maximum level, as promised, to meet the people's expectations and demands by preserving peace and security, providing services, countering the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, fighting terrorism and achieving political and economic reforms.

The economic situation remains a concern for the Iraqi Government, due to drops and fluctuations in oil prices on the one hand and large expenditures borne by Iraq in the fight against terrorism on the other. In that regard, as part of its efforts to face the economic and fiscal crisis, the Government has submitted a draft bill on economic reform to the House of Representatives, which will reduce dependence on oil revenues and enhance investment.

The situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic is critical and could lead to the collapse of the health system. Despite all the measures taken by the competent authorities, the number of people infected with the disease is continually high, reaching rates of 3,000 to 4,000 per day. In that connection, Iraq expresses its sincere gratitude to the World Health Organization and friendly States for their generous health aid to support Iraq in countering the pandemic.

One of the important commitments that the Government has made is to meet demonstrators' demands. Measures have been taken to fill in the trust gap with the people, especially the youth, by making their voices heard and honouring the constitutional rights of peaceful protests and freedom of expression of the people.

The Government promised to protect the demonstrators from any violations of human rights. In that regard, the competent authorities made great efforts to prevent violent groups from targeting the demonstrators and to minimize the number of incidents to the lowest level possible. Furthermore, the Government registers the families of the victims to receive the benefits stipulated by the martyr's law, which provides financial compensation and all the necessary medical treatment to wounded demonstrators.

Countering corruption is at the core of the reform process. In that regard, the Government has shown great keenness to restore full control over border checkpoints so as to prevent and deter any illegal actions. Meanwhile, vigorous legal attempts have been made to counter corruption and hold those who are involved in corruption accountable.

I am delighted to highlight one of the most important accomplishments, that is, the adoption of the new electoral law, which should pave the way for the electoral process to hold an early election on 6 June 2021, as declared by the Prime Minister of

Iraq, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. The adoption of the new law is the result of tireless efficient consultation between the Government and the legislative authority.

It is unquestionable that the Government came about in response to a political crisis, but it aspires to be a Government that accommodates solutions to urgent problems. In that regard, certain steps should be met in advance. First, the sovereignty of the State must be preserved and honoured. Secondly, it is vital to strengthen the rule of law and regain the State's control over all armed forces. Thirdly, foreign Powers must be prevented from turning our country into a base for their political and strategic agendas. Iraq's sovereignty and independence are crucial to the stability and security of the region. Iraq strives to maintain strong relations with countries, especially its neighbouring countries, in accordance with the principles of common interests and non-interference in internal affairs.

The Government pledges to enforce the State's authority by controlling the possession of arms, restricting them to Government and military institutions and enforcing the rule of law. To that end, the Government is engaged in a process of achieving security reform that promotes performance in the field, respects human rights and ensures professionalism, as well as countering the militarization of society by preventing any form of non-State intervention. The Government also seeks to prevent outlaw groups from targeting demonstrators and civilians in general and to counter any prohibited illegal acts, such as attacks targeting the diplomatic missions accredited in Iraq. In that regard, the security institutions arrested a number of suspects and is holding them accountable to fair legal procedures. The Government has therefore managed to take control of the situation since mid-October.

The Government is working tirelessly to create a proper environment for dialogue with the local Government of the Kurdistan region of Iraq regarding the upcoming fiscal budget, the control of border crossing points and the management of the region's oil resources. The central Government and the Kurdistan Regional Government reached two important agreements.

The first was a revenue-sharing agreement, with monthly transfers from Baghdad to Erbil to cover civil servants' salaries in exchange for access to customs revenues from borders under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government. The agreement covers salary payments for August, September and October.

The second agreement, reached on the status of northern Iraq's Sinjar district in Ninawa, paves the way for reconstruction in the northern part of the country. The deal ends the authority of intruding groups and paves the way for the reconstruction of the city and the full return of its people in coordination with the Kurdistan Regional Government. The deal is the outcome of months of serious work and discussions between the Kurdistan Regional Government and the federal Government. Both sides agreed that Sinjar would be jointly governed in terms of administration, security and services. The agreement is an unprecedented practice for the implementation of article 140 of the Constitution.

Fighting and countering terrorism are at the core of my country's security strategy. My Government believes that terrorism still poses an imminent threat and represents an obstacle to the reconstruction of liberated cities, the return of displaced citizens and access to humanitarian assistance. For instance, on 8 November Baghdad witnessed a terrorist attack on a military post, which led to the death of five civilians and six military personnel. In that regard, Iraq reiterates its commitment to continuing its cooperation with the international community on countering terrorism and facilitating the access of humanitarian assistance.

Iraq also welcomes all efforts undertaken to date to repatriate the family members of foreign terrorist fighters and urges other countries to receive their

non-convicted citizens. There remains an urgent need for concerted efforts to rehabilitate and reintegrate victims of terrorism, especially in the liberated areas. We acknowledge the efforts of the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism through the programme of repatriation from Iraq and Syria.

Iraq affirms its strong commitment to establishing friendly relations and cooperation with its neighbours and the international community. At the same time, my country expects the same spirit of cooperation and mutual respect from others. Unfortunately, Turkey irresponsibly insists on conducting military operations on Iraq's territory without prior consultation with the Government of Iraq. The operations have led to casualties among civilians and military personnel, including recently the death of five civilians and one person wounded. The Iraqi Government stresses that the Turkish violations of its territory are seen as irresponsible measures that do not take into account the promotion and development of a peaceful situation in international relations and are in breach of the Charter of the United Nations and in disregard for good-neighbourly relations. Furthermore, the Turkish Government has not taken any steps to inform or brief the Security Council on its unilateral measures over Iraqi territory. At this point, the Iraqi Government affirms its right to confront any attack that threatens the security of Iraq. In this perilous security situation, my country filed a complaint with the Security Council, documenting and requesting urgent steps to prevent future violations.

Concerning the relations with Kuwait, cooperation is the major focus of those relations, as Iraq respects its obligations, including searching for the remains of missing Kuwaitis and continuing to cover compensation instalments on time.

As a sign of commitment, Iraq handed over two lots of human remains — those of 21 missing persons on 16 September and of 48 missing persons on 8 August 2019. Meanwhile, Iraq calls on the Tripartite Commission and the State of Kuwait to accelerate the process of announcing the results of DNA tests of the remains.

The ongoing and painstaking search efforts to find a new set of Kuwaiti archives that were supposed to be delivered by the Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs in April continue but, due to the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery has been postponed.

Concerning compensation, a payment of \$230 million was made on 28 October.

The current situation has put Iraq in an extremely difficult position that no Government could survive alone without international cooperation and solidarity. Accordingly, we aspire to secure the Security Council's support in helping the new Government to achieve its priorities in the following ways.

First is by condemning violations of the sovereignty of the Republic of Iraq by any Member State and preventing such acts in the future.

Secondly, one of the most important messages that the Iraqi Government is trying to deliver to all is that Iraq will not be a staging ground for conflict or a base point for any other country's strategy towards any of the neighbouring countries, as Iraq aims to be an active player on the path of building peace, achieving stability and improving security opportunities.

Thirdly is by assisting the Government in addressing the main challenges, especially with regard to COVID-19 and the economic and financial crises.

Fourthly is by continuing to actively cooperate with Iraq in the war against terrorism, in which Iraq remains on the front line.

Fifthly is by continuing international humanitarian support to Iraq for the reconstruction of the areas liberated from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham and by facilitating the return of internally displaced people to their areas.

Sixthly is by continuing the vital role of the United Nations in the preparation of the upcoming early election by providing technical and logistical support to ensure integrity and credibility.

Iraq commends the support provided by the international community and reiterates that helping Iraq to preserve its national sovereignty will be a cornerstone for the success of the Government. The Iraqi Government has been mindful of strengthening its relationships with the neighbouring countries in the region by building bridges of cooperation with them all.

Furthermore, the Iraqi Government has engaged in a cooperative and strategic dialogue with many countries since August. As a result, many official visits from and to Iraq took place recently. For instance, a high-level delegation, led by the Prime Minister, visited the United States of America for the second session of a strategic dialogue, as well as Germany, France and the United Kingdom. The visits sought to strengthen dialogue with allies, including discussions of future cooperation in various fields, such as economic, security, cultural and health.

Iraq's policy of regional engagement also included the participation of the Prime Minister in the Iraq-Jordan-Egypt tripartite summit, hosted in Amman on 25 August, for the inspiration of a better and prosperous future of the region. Another sign of Iraq's positive regional engagement is the recent virtual meeting between the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Saudi Crown Prince on 10 November to review the outcome of the fourth session of the Iraqi-Saudi coordination council, which includes eight committees and took place on 8 November to discuss the prospects of bilateral relations and to foster the implementation of bilateral agreements and memorandums of understanding. Both sides agreed to develop a plan to accelerate the opening of the Iraqi-Saudi Arar border crossing and to enhance cooperation in several fields, most importantly energy and counter-terrorism.

I extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his supportive stances towards Iraq, and we hope that the international community will continue to help its people to achieve a stable and prosperous Iraq. I especially thank the Head of UNAMI and her team in Baghdad and New York for their tireless efforts.