



Security Council

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Letter dated 14 May 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 the 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 China, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, the Niger, the Russian Federation, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Viet Nam, in connection with the video-conference convened on Tuesday, 12 May 2020. A statement was also delivered by the representative of Iraq.

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

(Signed) **Sven Jürgenson**
President of the Security Council



Annex I

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

One can hardly overstate the magnitude of the challenges facing Iraq. The deep existing political, social, economic and security crises have now been compounded by the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and a dramatic drop in oil prices.

As the Iraqi health system was already near breaking point before the COVID-19 outbreak, the first priority was, and remains, to prevent a rapid spread of the virus. Within that context, I wish to reaffirm our support to the Iraqi authorities and to reiterate that no amount of Government response can succeed without the active involvement of the entire population.

I recently joined my voice to those of my fellow Special Envoys in the Middle East in echoing the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire in the broadest sense, not only militarily but also politically. Surely, at this time of acute crisis, partisanship and narrow interests must yield to the greater national cause and the good of the Iraqi people.

Unfortunately, as Iraq's economic situation worsened daily, we witnessed continued political infighting and saw three Prime Ministers-designate in just 10 weeks. However, at long last, a new Government was formed last week. The Council of Representatives confirmed Mustafa Al-Kadhimi as the new Prime Minister and approved his Government programme, as well as 15 out of 22 ministers. That is a long overdue but very welcome development. The swift completion of the remaining vacant positions, including the appointment of more women and minority representatives, is now necessary.

The new Prime Minister's stated priorities include addressing the COVID-19 health crisis, developing and reforming the security sector, limiting the control of arms to the State, strengthening the economy, fighting corruption and advancing accountability and justice. They also include holding a national dialogue, balancing external relations, safeguarding Iraqi sovereignty, promoting the return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin and working towards the conduct of early elections. These worthy aspirations must urgently be turned into action. Let me emphasize that Iraq does not have the luxury of time, nor can it afford destructive petty politics.

While the new Government entered office only a few days ago, its first decisions are promising. However, one does not need a crystal ball to understand that the road ahead will be fraught with many complex challenges. As I have stated many times, Iraq's challenges did not arise overnight. Moreover, they are larger than any single Government.

It is therefore most important to manage public expectations. There will be no sudden miracles. Equally important is a broad-based response that involves the entire political class and all communities, acting with a clear sense of unity and urgency, focused on building domestic strength and prioritizing the national interest.

The COVID-19 pandemic forced the streets to calm down but, with public trust at an all-time low, the Iraqi people, calling for a more prosperous and inclusive Iraq, will not let go. Iraq is facing a long list of urgent unfinished domestic business and, in order to regain public trust, the Government must prove itself able to carry out such essential functions as law and order and public service delivery.

On the issue of early elections, although they are a top priority for many, Parliament has not yet completed its work on the electoral framework, in particular the contentious issues of constituency delineation and seat apportionment.

I also wish to reiterate the pressing need for accountability and justice for the many deaths and injuries of innocent protesters. Allow me to say that we are encouraged by the early actions taken by the new Prime Minister, which demonstrate eagerness to move these important files forward.

The current economic situation has once again laid bare Iraq's vulnerability due to the grave lack of economic diversification. Iraq's monthly oil revenues dropped from \$6 billion to \$1.4 billion between February and April. At a time when the global financial system is being drained from all sides, it will be harder than ever to access international funds.

On top of this, the necessary curfews to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have brought commercial activity to a near standstill, imperilling the already problematic livelihoods of many Iraqis who rely on daily earnings to feed themselves and their families.

The need to broaden Iraq's revenue base could not be more apparent. Time and again, it has been made clear that Iraq should reduce its oil dependency, repair and upgrade critical infrastructure, tackle its ballooning, inefficient public service and build viable and responsive State institutions. It should also fight corruption, combat patronage and clientelism and incentivize the domestic private sector, while attracting foreign investment.

Iraq has clearly and repeatedly been encouraged to build a healthy environment that is conducive to broad-based, fairly distributed growth and employment generation, with the assistance of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and other partners. However, without adequate follow-up, the country will sadly remain ill-prepared to manage these acute shocks.

The economy is projected to contract by 9.7 per cent in 2020, with poverty rates increasing to approximately 40 per cent. Considerable losses in labour income, as well as a decrease in economic opportunities, are foreseen.

It is essential to restate that corruption is perhaps the greatest source of dysfunction in Iraq. It works against the average Iraqi woman and man and also puts off donors and potential investors, who are increasingly fed up with fighting the system for a chance to help the country.

Domestic, regional and international security developments continue to take their toll on the country. Inflammatory rhetoric and a pattern of attacks and counterattacks on Iraqi soil are obviously unproductive and most regrettable. Although these appear to have tapered off in recent weeks, they remain a constant threat to the stability of Iraq.

I can only emphasize that the way in which armed elements, with differing ties to the State, choose to act at this time will determine how Iraqis, and indeed many others, perceive them. Once again, Iraq cannot afford to be used as a theatre for different power competitions and/or proxy conflicts.

Also critical is the prevention of any attempted resurgence of violent extremism. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) must not be given room to step up its activities. The best form of counter-terrorism is for the Government to provide for its citizens, addressing the root causes that continue to allow groups such as ISIL to exist.

Turning to humanitarian concerns, we cautiously welcome the ongoing efforts to improve access authorization for humanitarian workers, especially the non-governmental organizations in Iraq that provide life-saving services. Humanitarian partners need access letters to pass through the multiple security checkpoints in their areas of operation. Unfortunately, many access requests remain unapproved.

Currently, access is even more constrained due to the COVID-19-related movement restrictions, adding another layer of complexity. A practical, long-term solution is urgently required, with an empowered focal point to regularly engage with humanitarian partners on access matters. I sincerely hope that the Iraqi authorities will now act without any further delay.

With regard to relations between Baghdad and Erbil, we still cannot point to a final, fully agreed and implemented deal on critical issues such as the federal budget, as well as oil and revenue-sharing. On the contrary, we recently witnessed movement in the opposite direction, as the previous federal Government announced it would halt payments to the Kurdistan region, affecting the salaries of civil servants. Regardless of the merits of that decision, the timing was most inopportune. Negotiations between Baghdad and Erbil are ongoing. I can only emphasize that a long-term sustainable approach is urgently needed. Of course, for any sustainable solution, it takes both parties.

With regard to Sinjar, there have been many promises but so far no signatures, let alone implementation, with the Yazidis notably paying the price. In the Kurdistan region, as elsewhere in Iraq, transparency, freedom of expression, fundamental reform and fighting corruption are of critical importance, as is political unity. Recent internal tensions do not serve the interests of the Kurdish people — far from it.

I now turn to the issue of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. Notwithstanding significant advances of late, the most recent being the discovery of human remains in a third grave at the Samawah site in January, COVID-19 has also impacted this file. The 113th meeting of the Technical Subcommittee, planned for 20 April, as well as other activities, had to be postponed. The Kuwaiti authorities were nevertheless able to carry out excavations of burial sites in Kuwait, as planned during the previous Technical Subcommittee meeting in February. I would like to encourage all members of the Tripartite Committee to follow this example, working together to identify other innovative ways to overcome the current constraints and adapt to the new reality.

In conclusion, I would like to return to the courageous conviction expressed by countless Iraqis in recent months. Their hopes and demands remain burning issues and should guide the new Government. I sincerely hope that no party, person or entity will be allowed to hijack the legitimate demands of the Iraqi people.

With that in mind, I wish to salute Grand Ayatollah Al-Sistani, whose calm wisdom serves as an example to us all. I remain convinced that a more just, prosperous and resilient Iraq can emerge from the current compounded crises. However, for that to happen, political will is fundamental.

As I said last time (see S/PV.8676), Iraq must move away from endless crisis management towards a more productive approach, building resilience at both the State and the societal level. Short-term political and private calculations do not serve Iraq's long-term interests — on the contrary. The challenges are many, but so are the opportunities. I would like to reaffirm the continued support of the United Nations to the people of Iraq as well as Iraq's new Government.

Annex II

Statement by the Acting Deputy Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations, Yao Shaojun

I thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for the informative briefing. We appreciate the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, in line with its mandate. I also welcome the Ambassador of Iraq, who is participating in this meeting.

We welcome the formation of a new Government of Iraq, led by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. The Iraqi people have demonstrated once again that they have the will, wisdom and capability to find solutions to the challenges that they face. The international community should fully respect and support the Iraqi people in pursuing the peace and development of their country. In that connection, I would like to emphasize the following three points.

First, we should fully respect Iraq's sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. At this critical time, we should endeavour to create an enabling environment for the Government and people of Iraq to move forward the Iraq-led and Iraq-owned reconstruction process. In giving a helping hand, the international community must listen first to the views of Iraq, refrain from imposing solutions and never interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

China is concerned about the negative impact of regional tensions on the peace and security of Iraq. We call on the relevant parties on the ground to follow the Secretary-General's appeal of a global ceasefire, exercise restraint and pursue immediate de-escalation. As the Secretary-General and the Special Representative have emphasized, Iraq should not become an arena for external conflicts. Any military action on Iraqi territory must be subject to the consent of the Iraqi Government.

We welcome the continued efforts of Iraq to strengthen relations with its neighbours, and commend the collaboration between Iraq and Kuwait in resolving the issue of missing Kuwaiti persons and property.

Secondly, we should support Iraq in consolidating its counter-terrorism achievements. In his recent report (S/2020/363), the Secretary-General notes the increased activities of terrorist groups in Iraq, which have claimed 370 incidents since January compared with 187 incidents during the same period last year. That is a worrisome and clear reminder that an immediate threat of terrorism still exists. The international community must continue its support to Iraq in the fight against the remnant forces of terrorism and assist the country in addressing the problem of foreign terrorist fighters.

We should also support Iraq in bringing terrorists to justice in accordance with the relevant domestic laws and with full respect for its sovereignty and jurisdiction. China recognizes the important work done by the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, in accordance with its mandate, and encourages it to closely engage with the Iraqi Government.

Thirdly, we should support Iraq's efforts to address the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and foster economic and social development. The threat of the pandemic compounds the economic and security difficulties in Iraq. We call on international partners, including the relevant United Nations bodies and agencies, to provide more assistance to Iraq so as to enhance its preparedness and response to COVID-19.

China values its strategic partnership and friendly cooperation with Iraq. We stand with Iraq in this public health crisis. Last month, a team of Chinese medical experts just finished its mission in Iraq in combating COVID-19. The experts spent 50 days in Iraq, visited nine provinces, conducted 27 training courses for more than 1,000 medical staff and helped to launch a testing laboratory.

Measures to mitigate the socioeconomic impact of the pandemic should be in parallel with the efforts on sustainable development, which is key to sustaining peace and stability. China therefore welcomes the commitment of the new Government of Iraq to boosting the economy, reducing unemployment and improving public services.

China believes that the international community has an important role to play in helping Iraq to rebuild its critical infrastructure, eradicate poverty, ensure better access to health care and quality education and improve the livelihoods of the ordinary people. We have been doing our part actively and constructively during the past years, including through the Belt and Road Initiative.

It is our sincere hope that, with the strong support of the international community, the Government and people of Iraq will succeed in building a peaceful and prosperous nation.

Annex III

Statement by the Special Envoy to the Security Council of the Dominican Republic, José Singer Weisinger

We wish to start by expressing our deepest condolences to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and to Chad, as well as our condemnation of the recent attack against Blue Helmets in Mali.

We would like to thank Ms. Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and for her leadership.

We commend the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in supporting the measures implemented by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to address the current health crisis and to prevent a larger outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The Dominican Republic expresses its support to the recently elected Prime Minister, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, and notes with satisfaction his aspirations to strengthen the economy, tackle corruption and restore State sovereignty, as well as his willingness to take a new approach to the social unrest by meeting and consulting with protesters.

With regard to relations between Baghdad and Erbil, we commend the cooperation between the federal Government and the Regional Government on issues relating to security, especially the fight against the remnants of the Islamic State, as well as the continued engagement to resolve pending issues, including an agreement on oil-revenue sharing.

Similarly, we welcome the efforts of Iraq to foster relations with other countries on regional stability, cooperation to counter the Islamic State, the reconstruction of Iraq and bilateral relations, including the opening of a dialogue between the United States and Iraq based on the Strategic Framework Agreement of 2013.

On a different note, it is of great concern that the Islamic State is gradually gathering strength and increasing its activity. We therefore urge the international community to make greater efforts and collaborate closely with Iraq to prevent the resurgence of the Islamic State and its heinous crimes.

On the issue of human rights, we condemn the recent acts of violence, disappearances and killings perpetrated against journalists, demonstrators and activists by unidentified men amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, we encourage a thorough investigation of these incidents with a view to identifying the perpetrators and establishing accountability.

In relation to the humanitarian situation, we encourage the federal Government and the Regional Government to work closely with the Humanitarian Coordinator's leadership to streamline communication and processes across governorates to facilitate the provision of aid, as well as to ensure coherent preparedness for the COVID-19 outbreak.

Considering recent data related to the steady increase of gender-based violence cases, including domestic violence, following the implementation of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, we urge UNAMI to actively engage with civil society organizations dealing with gender-based violence to find ways to better address the issue and assist the Government in this task.

Regarding the unresolved issue of Kuwaiti and third-country missing persons, we welcome the progress achieved thus far by members of the Tripartite Mechanism

in the search for prisoners and missing persons reported by Kuwait, the recent discoveries of human remains and the devolution of assets and federal files.

In conclusion, we look forward to the prompt formation of an inclusive Government that ensures the participation of women and youth and that tackles, with due diligence and responsibility, the major challenges facing the country. Moreover, we are hopeful that all parties can foster reconciliation and political dialogue with a view to ending the political deadlock that has persisted and consequently prevented authorities from making the necessary social and economic reforms.

Annex IV

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 and for the excellent work that she and her team are doing in support of the Iraqi Government.

As indicated by the Special Representative, Iraq is facing a series of significant challenges, including in the political, economic and security fields. In addition, the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated the situation even further. We welcome the measures taken by the Government of Iraq to contain the spread of the virus.

Considering the urgency of effectively addressing these multiple challenges, and in order to respond to the needs of the people, it is crucial that all political actors put their differences aside and that national unity and solidarity prevail.

We welcome last Thursday's development, with the Iraqi Parliament's approval of the new Government led by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. We hope that the remaining ministerial seats will be filled promptly and that women will be included when assigning the remaining posts as part of efforts to ensure their full participation in the political process. This is an important step towards responding to the legitimate aspirations of the Iraqi people. We call on the international community to support Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi in his efforts to realize a democratic, peaceful and prosperous Iraq.

We call on the new Government to accelerate structural reforms, including economic reforms, improve governance and take effective measures to counter corruption and implement the rule of law. To improve the stability of Iraq, it is essential to implement security-sector reform and bring all armed forces under State control.

As set out among the priorities of the new Government, we encourage Iraq to complete the electoral reform process, to hold free, fair and credible elections, and to continue engaging with the United Nations for technical assistance and support.

As regional tensions continue to affect stability in Iraq, we reiterate that all actors must respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq. We fully support the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire and call on all actors to refrain from all military action, which would threaten the stability of Iraq. It is also crucial not to allow the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant to make gains from the increased challenges, including those caused by COVID-19. The continued support of the international community to the security and reconstruction of Iraq remains crucial.

The continued reports of human-rights violations against protesters, civil-society activists and human-rights defenders are deeply worrying. As the restrictive measures related to COVID-19 will soon be lifted, it is crucial that the authorities secure freedom of speech and assembly, protect peaceful protestors from violence, investigate all violations and ensure accountability.

Unfortunately, the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has the greatest impact on vulnerable populations. This calls for additional measures to prevent gender-based violence, including support to victims of domestic violence. We also urge the Government of Iraq to engage with the United Nations in finding lasting solutions for the large number internally displaced persons and to secure their safe and dignified return to their places of origin.

In conclusion, I would like to express Estonia's full solidarity with Iraq in these difficult times and call on the new Government to work together with the United Nations and its international partners towards stability, prosperity and peace.

Annex V**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations, Anne Gueguen**

[Original: English and French]

I thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Ms. Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, for her presentation and for the outstanding work the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) is doing under her leadership. She has the full support of France in her mission.

France congratulates the new Prime Minister, Mr. Mustafa Al-Kadhimi, on his nomination and the formation of the Iraqi Government. We are confident that the remaining governmental positions will be filled promptly, and with the participation of women.

As the Special Representative underlined, Iraq is facing many internal, regional and economic challenges, and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic is adding to that already difficult situation. It is essential that we all provide our support to Iraq at this crucial moment to contain and mitigate the pandemic, which could have tragic consequences, especially for the most vulnerable, and to consolidate the national democratic project of the country. There are four main elements that I would like to underline in this regard.

First, it is essential that the new Iraqi Government challenge the status quo in the country to live up to the expectations of the Iraqi people. Meaningful reforms are needed in fighting corruption, promoting sustainable economic growth and diversification, streamlining bureaucracy, improving public services and ensuring gender equality. Iraqi women have also courageously participated in the protests and the full diversity of their voices and demands must be taken into account in any political and decision-making processes.

The first measures announced by Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi are encouraging, in particular the commission charged with identifying those responsible for the repression of protesters. Indeed, accountability is crucial to ensuring a stable and democratic Iraq in the long term. The inclusion of members of civil society in the commission is a positive sign, and we encourage the Iraqi Government to continue such engagement with civil society in all areas.

Free, fair, inclusive and transparent elections will also be a major milestone in the path towards a sovereign and democratic Iraq.

Secondly, it is crucial that Iraq stay away from regional tensions, in line with the Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. This is essential for the stability of the country and to facilitate the fight against COVID-19. It is also indispensable for the ongoing fight against Da'esh, in which the international coalition plays a crucial role in support of the Iraqi Government. In this regard, it is also essential that all armed groups be effectively under the control of the State authorities.

Thirdly, the humanitarian situation remains of great concern, in particular in the context of the pandemic. We are deeply concerned by the situation of the 1.4 million internally displaced persons, who are extremely vulnerable. Efforts to prevent and respond to COVID-19 must be scaled up, notably in camps for displaced persons and refugees. Swift, safe and unhindered humanitarian access, which has become more difficult over the past few months, is more necessary than ever. In this context, France will continue its assistance efforts, in particular in the fields of humanitarian assistance and health — long-standing priorities for us — including the rebuilding and development of the Faculty of Medicine in Mosul and the

construction of a hospital in Sinjar. France will, in particular, support the survivors of sexual violence in Sinjar in the context of the work of the Global Survivors Fund.

Fourthly, in this context, it is essential that UNAMI continue to be equipped with a robust mandate in support of the Iraqi people and Government. It plays an indispensable role in favour of inclusive political dialogue, reconciliation, electoral assistance, human rights and accountability. We also strongly encourage UNAMI to continue its engagement with civil society.

Finally, I wish to make some remarks on the developments pertaining to missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. Progress is being made monthly on this important issue despite some inevitable delays due to the pandemic. It is important that the cooperation among all actors involved remain strong.

Let me conclude by stressing our conviction that a sovereign, inclusive and prosperous Iraq is crucial for a stable and peaceful Middle East. My country is committed to standing firmly alongside the Iraqi people and their Government during these challenging times.

Annex VI

Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, Juergen Schulz

We continue to fully support the efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq in support of the people and the Government of Iraq.

Germany welcomes the formation of the new Government, led by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. We hope that the Government-formation process will be concluded swiftly, including the appointments of women to cabinet positions.

Since October 2019, peaceful protesters in Iraq have raised, and continue to raise, serious and legitimate demands, addressed to Iraq's political leaders and parliamentary actors. We have taken note that the declared priorities of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's Government, and indeed the initial measures announced by his cabinet, reflect those demands. Those priorities include preparation of early elections, addressing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the economic crisis, concentrating State control over arms, adopting the federal budget for 2020, conducting a national dialogue, investigating violence against protesters, safeguarding Iraqi sovereignty, continuing the fight against corruption and securing the return of internally displaced persons.

We call on the new Government and all Iraqi political leaders to take swift and effective action with a view to implementing these urgently required reforms in order to meet the legitimate needs and demands of the Iraqi people, to regain public trust and to improve the lives of Iraqi citizens.

We join the Secretary-General in his call for a political process in which women, youth and all of Iraq's diverse communities, including ethnic, religious and other minorities, can actively participate.

The implementation of substantive reforms has become even more urgent in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and mounting political, economic, security, social and health challenges. Germany, as one of Iraq's leading donors, stands ready to continue its substantial support to Iraq and to work closely together with the new Iraqi Government in addressing these challenges and building a prosperous and stable Iraq.

In this context, we remain concerned about the difficulties facing national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) since December 2019, which affect their critical work on humanitarian, stabilization and development efforts. The absence of an efficient access procedure for NGOs is also now, regrettably, affecting the response to COVID-19.

We remain deeply concerned by reports of arrests and violence against protesters, civil society activists, human-rights defenders and journalists. In response to popular protests, serious human-rights violations and abuses against peaceful protesters have occurred. Systematic attempts to threaten and prevent people from exercising their fundamental right to peaceful assembly and their freedom of expression are unacceptable.

The Iraqi Government has an obligation to protect all peaceful protesters, civil-society activists and human-rights defenders and their fundamental rights. We welcome Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's personal commitment to that effect.

All incidents in which excessive use of force by security forces or other armed groups have resulted in the death or injury of protesters, as well as all other acts of violence, including those against security forces, and unlawful detention should

be investigated independently and transparently. Accountability for all crimes committed remains of utmost importance. In this respect, we are encouraged by the initial steps of the Al-Kadhimi Government to release detainees arrested during the protests and push forward with investigations.

We are also concerned by reports of increased levels of domestic violence during the current COVID-19 curfew and call on the Iraqi Government to take concrete steps to ensure that victims of domestic violence have access to appropriate protection and that the perpetrators of domestic violence are held accountable. We welcome the continued dialogue between Baghdad and Erbil and encourage both sides to resolve all outstanding issues, including those related to natural resources, revenue-sharing and security arrangements.

We remain concerned by the impact of regional tensions on Iraq and call for continued de-escalation and restraint by all regional and international players.

Iraq should neither be dragged into nor become an arena for a regional confrontation. Instead, Iraq should be able to enjoy amicable relations with all its neighbours and partners.

We condemn the repeated rocket attacks in Iraq on coalition troops countering the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Such attacks are unacceptable and put the successes achieved in the fight against the Islamic State at risk. It is crucial that cooperation between the Government of Iraq and its international partners in the fight against terrorism be continued. Otherwise, Iraq and the international community will face a high risk of the resurgence of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and in the region.

Annex VII

Statement by the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Indonesia to the United Nations, Dian Triansyah Djani

Let me begin by expressing our deepest condolences in connection with the fallen Blue Helmets in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

I also would like to express our appreciation to Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her important update. Following her most recent briefing, in early March (see S/PV.8739), we were pleased to learn that Iraq is on the path of recovery and reconstruction and that there are signs of progress towards stable nation-building.

Indonesia further reiterates its support for Iraqi sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. I would also like to underscore, as mentioned by Jeanine, that attacks and counter-attacks on Iraqi soil remain a constant threat to the stability of the country.

I should also like to underscore the following.

First, on the political situation, we would like to echo the Secretary-General's welcome of the new Government of Iraq, led by Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi. As Iraq is a young democracy, its journey will not be easy; however, if we always put the interests of the people first, the efforts made will yield the desired results. In particular, during a challenging time such as this Iraq needs a stable and effective Government, and the authorities need to work in unison in the spirit of national unity in addressing the challenges confronting the Iraqi people. That will enable the Government to deliver basic services and to address the immediate needs, demands and interests of Iraq's diverse communities, including ethnic and religious minorities, women and youth.

We also welcome Prime Minister's Al-Kadhimi's priorities in tackling the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and on accountability, as mentioned by Jeanine. Also, as noted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/363), the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the overall situation in Iraq and is compounded by political, security, economic, humanitarian and other challenges.

In that connection, to improve the economic situation, which has also been affected by the pandemic, and compensate for the fall in global oil prices, there is a need to undertake structural reform, combat corruption and promote sustainable economic growth and diversification. It is easy for us to say all these words, but it is more important that we translate them into reality by supporting Iraq, as it is in the interest of the international community to support the country's economic growth and stability. A stable and prosperous Iraq will contribute to peace in the region.

Secondly, concerning the security situation, Indonesia is concerned that the remnants of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant have continued to launch frequent attacks against civilians and security forces in some areas, doubling their claimed activities to 370 incidents since January 2020, as compared with 187 incidents during the same period last year. We express our support for the efforts of the Government and the security forces in combating terrorism.

Security and stability are crucial to nation-building and economic development. The same goes for support by the countries of the region and key countries aimed at achieving a stable and prosperous Iraq, which in turn will bring benefits regionally and globally.

Thirdly, concerning the humanitarian situation, we welcome the efforts of the Government, supported by the United Nations, to address the humanitarian situation, particularly in providing durable solutions for the internally displaced. We also note that efforts concerning the missing Kuwaiti persons and third-country nationals, as well as the return of Kuwaiti property, are being delayed because of constraints relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, we have confidence that with continued collaboration within the Tripartite Commission, progress is attainable.

To conclude, Indonesia supports the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) as well as the renewal of UNAMI's mandate this month. We are certain that the work of UNAMI in supporting the Government and the people of Iraq, particularly in terms of the COVID-19 response, will be of monumental importance to the well-being of the people of Iraq and the region.

As mentioned earlier, Iraq does not have the luxury of time, and thus it is incumbent for us in the Council not to forget the Iraqi people, who rely on the international community, in particular in this time of COVID-19. Let the Iraqi people have a peaceful Ramadan month.

Annex VIII

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

The Niger is horrified by the senseless attacks on peacekeepers in Mali and on innocent mothers and children in Afghanistan.

I wish to thank Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her briefing and for the hard work she is doing with her team in Iraq's complex environment. We also welcome the representative of Iraq to this meeting.

The Niger welcomes the formation of a new Government in Iraq. We look forward to working with Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Kadhimi and his Cabinet members. We take note of the new Government's reform agenda, which includes

“addressing the COVID-19 health crisis, bringing arms under State control, strengthening the economy, protecting demonstrators, balancing external relations, safeguarding Iraqi sovereignty from external interference and securing the return of internally displaced persons to their places of origin” (*S/2020/363, para. 9*).

We wish them luck in this new endeavour.

We also reiterate our encouragement to the Iraqi authorities for their continuing efforts to develop friendly relations with neighbouring countries and to expand their partnership at the regional and global levels. Along the same lines, we appeal to all stakeholders inside and outside Iraq to exercise maximum restraint for the sake of the Iraqi people. As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert noted in the Chamber on 3 March (see *S/PV.8739*), Iraq has come a long way. The efforts made, however minimal, must be appreciated, supported and encouraged.

The Niger supports the efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) to find a lasting solution in Iraq by promoting dialogue among the political parties and regional Governments, strengthening State institutions and in particular providing assistance for electoral processes per its mandate. UNAMI's support for the Independent High Electoral Commission to rebuild its institutional and electoral operational capacities is at its most important point, with the Iraqis taking the step of forming a Government.

Furthermore, the political process must be part of a quest for solutions to the multiple challenges facing Iraq today. The Niger remains convinced that a sustainable process must include Iraqi women, and, in that regard, we welcome the UNAMI consultations with the Women's Advisory Group, whose demands for representation at all levels of political participation and protection remain legitimate.

The Niger commends the determination of UNAMI, the Tripartite Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross with respect to the issue of Kuwaiti and third-country missing persons, property and archives from the first Gulf War. We also welcome the recent discoveries made, as this will bring closure to some Kuwaitis and further the relationship between the two countries.

The Niger remains gravely concerned about the ongoing acts of violence against peaceful protesters and journalists. We call on the new Government to accelerate the process of finding those culpable and holding them accountable for their actions in accordance with the rule of law and Iraq's Constitution.

We also join the Secretary-General's call in urging the Government of Iraq to find tangible measures to protect all peaceful protesters, civil-society activists and human right defenders.

Iraq, like all other countries, is not immune to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In fact, we just learned that COVID-19 had halted activities on many fronts. My delegation commends the early and active engagement of the Government of Iraq in joining global efforts to contain the rapid spread of the pandemic with the help of the World Health Organization and UNAMI. In the same spirit of containment, we appeal for a special pardon; the halting of mass arrests for persons breaking the curfew; and measures to prevent potential violence, including alternatives to family visits and timely information for detainees.

In addition to the threat posed by COVID-19, terrorism represents another, equally dangerous menace. We commend the continued support of the United Nations in stabilizing the five governorates in Iraq that were previously under the control of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. Nonetheless, that terrorist group continues to operate in, and attack the population of, Iraq and foreign troops in the country. We call on the Iraqi authorities, with the support of their partners, to continue the fight against terrorists while ensuring respect for international human rights law.

My last point relates to the humanitarian access issue. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, an estimated 4.1 million people in Iraq require some form of humanitarian assistance this year. The Niger calls on the Government to take immediate steps to facilitate safe, timely and unhindered access for humanitarian organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance and protection to the people affected.

I would like to conclude by reiterating the Niger's support for UNAMI's work in accordance with the mandate assigned to it by the Security Council. Lastly, I call for the international community to support the new Government and its reforms so that Iraq does not fall back into dark days.

Annex IX**Statement by the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations, Vladimir Safronkov**

We thank Special Representative of the Secretary-General Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert for her tireless efforts and express our thanks and support to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for its efforts in that very complicated environment. We deeply appreciate what the Mission is doing in the country. We also welcome the participation of the Permanent Representative of Iraq in this meeting.

We welcome the appointment of the new Prime Minister and emphasize with satisfaction that his Cabinet's programme has been approved by the Parliament. We are aware of the Government's priorities, which include holding free and fair elections, mobilizing all resources to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, launching a national dialogue, protecting the sovereignty of the country, fighting terrorism and other goals. We are ready to support — and indeed already support — all efforts aimed at improving the situation in friendly Iraq.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the overall situation in Iraq and has multiplied the political, economic and humanitarian challenges there. In that context, it is important that the international community support Baghdad as it develops comprehensive measures aimed at responding to the COVID-19 outbreak.

We are strongly convinced, and we continue to reiterate, that only inclusive dialogue and reconciliation will help overcome the internal disputes in Iraq and restore mutual understanding between Baghdad and Erbil. Further improvement of their relations will help Iraq promote security and the effective use of its economic capacity. We therefore encourage both sides once again to reach and implement a comprehensive agreement on all outstanding issues.

We note that the COVID-19 outbreak has led to a suspension of demonstrations across the country. In that regard, we call on all sides to continue to act in a reserved manner. However, we believe that it would be unacceptable for external players to instrumentalize the domestic situation.

Iraq should not be dragged into a regional confrontation or become an arena for regional disputes or the settling of scores. Such attempts would contravene international law, violate Iraq's sovereignty and damage the country's national interests. We highly value and encourage Iraq's continued efforts to build constructive and fruitful relations with all its neighbours and the region as a whole.

It is high time to begin implementation of resolution 598 (1987), to devise measures to enhance the security of the region and to take a closer look at other relevant initiatives, including the Russian security concept for the Gulf region, France's constructive ideas and Iran's peace proposal. I am of the strong opinion that UNAMI could significantly contribute to the normalization of the political environment around Iran, since the Special Representative has an office in Tehran. We have to use this potential to normalize the operative environment at this difficult time. We are deeply concerned that the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant is already trying to exploit the pandemic and increase its activities. I would be grateful for the Special Representative's comments on that issue.

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

We, too, thank Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her informative briefing and her leadership under these extraordinarily difficult circumstances. I wish also to recognize my friend and colleague Ambassador Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom, the Permanent Representative of Iraq.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the political progress made in Iraq, including progress towards the formation of the new Government. Iraq is now grappling with the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, and we recognize and commend the Government's early engagement to contain its spread. We also acknowledge the coordination between the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and the World Health Organization to support the Government's measures in this regard. We reiterate that the fight against COVID-19 is a shared one requiring close cooperation.

We encourage the Government to keep human dignity at the centre of its efforts to combat COVID-19, to protect the most vulnerable people, including displaced persons, and to ensure that appropriate mechanisms and laws are in place for the protection of victims of domestic violence. We also emphasize the need for the unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to persons in need. Most persons targeted for humanitarian assistance under the humanitarian response plan are displaced persons, and we take this opportunity to underscore the need for the relevant authorities to facilitate the voluntary, safe and dignified return and reintegration of displaced persons in accordance with international law.

In addition to fighting the pandemic, Iraq is still recovering from the war on terror, and we remain concerned that remnants of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant continue to launch frequent attacks against the Iraqi people.

We commend UNAMI for its constructive engagement in Iraq, including its commitment to resolve the issue of missing Kuwaiti persons and property, and recognize the commitment of Iraq's Ministry of Defence and the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross in that regard.

Regarding Iraq's path to reconciliation and reconstruction, we stress that the exclusion of any group within Iraqi society can have a crippling effect. Impunity can also adversely impact the reconciliation process. To that end, we encourage the Government to pursue accountability for violations of international law and encourage UNAMI to support the Government in that endeavour, in accordance with the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity.

In conclusion, we reiterate our support for UNAMI and encourage the countries of the region and the international community to help strengthen Iraq's domestic capacities in order to promote its path to reconstruction.

Last but by no means least, I wish to extend our condolences to the families of the Blue Helmets recently killed in Mali. May they rest in peace and may their good work always be remembered.

Annex XI**Statement by the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, Jerry Matjila**

We 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 insightful briefing.

South Africa supports the mandate renewal of UNAMI, in its current form, as it partners with the Government of Iraq in its post-conflict reconstruction and development efforts and provides much-needed humanitarian assistance throughout the country.

South Africa would like to commend the Government of Iraq for the actions it has taken to combat the threat of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The pandemic has greater impact on countries emerging from conflict, like Iraq. We appeal to the international donor community to continue providing the much-needed humanitarian assistance and medical supplies to assist the Government of Iraq as it addresses COVID-19.

One of the unfortunate negative consequences of the virus is the increased in domestic violence. The Iraqi Government must ensure the protection of women, provide the necessary support services and commit to prosecuting perpetrators of domestic violence.

Regarding political developments, South Africa congratulates the Government of Iraq and its people on the election of Prime Minister Mustafa Al-Khadimi. We look forward to the formation of a full Cabinet, with the hope that it will enable Iraq to implement new programmes to improve the lives of all Iraqi citizens, balance external relations, safeguard Iraqi sovereignty and secure the return of internally displaced persons.

South Africa supports the initiative for an inclusive Government that will bring together the diverse aspects of Iraqi society into governance structures. National reconciliation and unity in Iraq are vital if it is to avoid future challenges related to fractured Government policies and actions.

South Africa notes with appreciation the fraternal manner in which the central Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government reached an agreement on oil production. Continued dialogue between them on oil and revenue-sharing is also essential, especially in the light of the severe economic challenges. The Secretary-General's call to act now in order to boost the immunity of our societies against the virus of hate could not be more relevant.

Iraq continues to face severe challenges that accelerate the spread of extremism and finds itself entwined in regional rivalries that arise out of the military misadventures of others. We wish to reiterate the Secretary-General's calls for international and regional partners to exercise restraint, pursue immediate de-escalation, support Iraq in its efforts to maintain security and stability and prevent Iraq from becoming an arena for external conflicts.

South Africa supports the consolidation of the Iraqi army's full control over its territories, as well as the efforts of its Government to eradicate the threat posed by the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

Peace and security are fundamental for Iraq to develop its infrastructure, grow its economy and provide basic services to all of its citizens. South Africa wishes to highlight the success of the Peacebuilding Commission in supporting

the Government's inclusivity efforts, specifically in institution-building and post-reconstruction development.

South Africa is encouraged by the collaborative efforts of the Governments of Kuwait and Iraq to locate missing Kuwaiti nationals and others, as well as missing Kuwaiti property, including the national archives. We are encouraged by positive developments in that regard, as reflected in the Secretary-General's report (S/2020/358). We urge both countries to work together with the relevant United Nations institutions to resolve those outstanding issues.

In conclusion, 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.

South Africa echoes the sentiments of Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert — that Iraq does not have the luxury of time. The Iraqi people must set aside their differences and join hands to build an Iraq that belongs to all its people and to ensure lasting peace.

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

I join others in condemning the recent attacks on peacekeepers in Mali. The people who carry out such attacks are the enemies of peace. All they do is encourage us to redouble our efforts in that country.

I would like to begin by thanking Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert for her thorough briefing. We also join others in welcoming the parliamentary confirmation of Mustafa Al-Kadhimi as the new Prime Minister of Iraq and the appointment of the majority of his Cabinet. As our Foreign Secretary conveyed to Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi on 12 May, the United Kingdom is committed to supporting this new Government in addressing the challenges facing Iraq.

We urge the Iraqi Parliament to swiftly appoint the remaining ministry posts in order to enable the Government of Iraq to deliver for all the Iraqi people. We encourage the new Government to work closely with the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) in the coming months.

As other members of the Council have said, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) poses a serious threat to Iraq, as it does to all countries. We commend the actions taken by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government to ensure the safety of its citizens as they tackle COVID-19. We welcome the unity that political and religious leaders have demonstrated during this time. The United Kingdom supports Iraq's efforts to combat the pandemic, including through the provision of over \$12 million in assistance for that purpose.

But as Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert said, the impact of COVID-19 and the fall in global oil prices have only compounded the serious economic challenges facing Iraq. To address those challenges, Iraq will need to undertake difficult reforms and will require the sustained support of the international community. In that connection, we look forward to the new Government's early engagement with international financial institutions. The United Kingdom has contributed over \$19 million to the World Bank's Iraq Reform and Reconstruction Fund, and we hope that others will look to do the same.

We urge both the Kurdistan Regional Government and the Government of Iraq to continue to tackle Iraq's security challenges. That includes making progress on negotiations on the internally disputed territories. We join others on the Council in expressing concern about the increasing frequency of attacks by Da'esh in recent months, culminating in the deaths of a number of members of Iraqi federal police and popular mobilization forces on 2 and 3 May. Like the other members of the global coalition against Da'esh, the United Kingdom remains committed to supporting Iraq in its efforts to prevent a Da'esh resurgence. That must be our priority.

In that regard, we condemn the actions of groups operating within Iraq, which resulted in the death of Lance Corporal Brodie Gillon and two United States service personnel on 11 March, and further attacks on 14 March that injured both United States and Iraqi service personnel. We urge the Government of Iraq to take swift action against those who caused the deaths of coalition and Iraqi troops and to prevent future incidents.

The formation of the new Government is an opportunity to address the legitimate demands expressed during the protests in recent months and to investigate

and hold accountable those who used excessive force against the protesters. We welcome the early steps taken by the Government in that regard.

We also welcome UNAMI's readiness to support the Government of Iraq's efforts to make technical preparations for elections, including through the Mission's continued support of the Independent High Electoral Commission. The Government of Iraq and UNAMI should work together on the provision of technical assistance and support for future elections.

Also welcome is the continued engagement between the international community and the Government of Iraq. We note the decision of the United States to extend the waivers allowing Iraq to continue to import gas and electricity from Iran.

The United Kingdom notes the recent 112th meeting of the Technical Subcommittee and regrets the postponement of the subsequent meeting. We note, however, that the exhumation of a third mass grave site on 31 January will provide long-needed closure to Kuwaitis.

We urge the international community to support the new Government in Iraq as it addresses the pressing health, economic, security and political issues confronting the country. The success of the new Government of Iraq is in the interests of all of us.

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

I would like to begin by expressing our condemnation of the 10 May attack against a convoy belonging to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and express our deepest condolences to the victims' families in Chad. We underscore the importance of ensuring the safety and security of peacekeepers, and we call on the Government of Mali to swiftly investigate the attack and bring the perpetrators to justice.

It was my distinct pleasure to have had a conversation this morning with Special Representative Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert. I agree with her that the challenges are many. I can tell the Council that she is certainly up to the challenge. After speaking with her, I echo her statement and feel more confident than ever that Iraqi elections will be by and for the Iraqi people. I thank her so much for her time with me this morning, because it has given me the confidence to go back to the Trump Administration, which, as the Council knows, spoke with Iraq's Prime Minister yesterday. I feel very confident in our conversation.

Last week's confirmation of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi by Iraq's Council of Representatives marks a tremendous achievement. In the face of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), low oil prices and long-standing economic and security challenges, including State control of armed groups, Iraq could not have asked for a more capable leader. With Al-Kadhimi as Prime Minister and Special Representative Hennis-Plasschaert leading the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI), Iraq is well-positioned to navigate its many challenges. The Trump Administration looks forward to helping Iraq's new Government realize its bold agenda and deliver a life of dignity, security and prosperity to all Iraqis.

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global threat, the likes of which we have not seen in 100 years. As we know all too well, this virus knows no borders and does not discriminate based on communal or sectarian identities. Iraq's new Government will have to be vigilant and proactive to ensure that COVID-19 does not reverse our hard-fought progress in restoring Iraqi stability. To help prevent any such reversal, the United States has provided nearly \$30 million in COVID-19 assistance for Iraq. That funding is helping to implement a public-health emergency plan, prepare laboratories for medical work and much more. It also builds upon my country's long-term investment in Iraq — more than \$70 billion of assistance over the past 20 years, including nearly \$4 billion for the health sector.

But funding alone will not be enough. And on that note, we must recognize that many relief actors, including United States partners, continue to report access constraints for the provision of humanitarian assistance on the ground. We commend UNAMI's advocacy to resolve that issue, and we urge the Iraqi authorities to find a permanent solution to ensure the delivery of vital assistance.

We cannot and will not forget the Iraqi protesters from all walks of life expressing their legitimate economic and governance grievances. We will also not forget the human rights abuses perpetrated against them in recent months. UNAMI's work is invaluable in monitoring and documenting such human rights violations and abuses. Iraq's new Government must follow the paper trail and bring to justice those responsible for human rights abuses.

The Special Representative highlighted UNAMI's continued engagement on the Kuwaiti missing persons and archives file. We once again welcome those efforts.

Finally, I would like to reiterate our strong belief that credible elections represent Iraq's best opportunity to usher in structural change, genuine reforms and a better life for all Iraqi citizens. We urge UNAMI to heed the call of Iraqis across the political and social spectrum — a call demanding United Nations-supported, Iraqi-led and Iraqi-owned elections that, as the Special Representative said, must be free and fair. With UNAMI's help, the Iraqi Government can restore public faith in elections and can provide a credible vehicle for carrying out the people's will.

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

I join my colleagues in extending our deepest condolences to the fallen Blue Helmets of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali.

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 informative briefing. I would also like to welcome the presence of the Permanent Representative of Iraq at our meeting today.

Amid the continued complexities with respect to the situation in the country, we very much welcome the appointment of the first formal Government of Iraq since December, under the leadership of Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi. We take note of the recent decision of the Supreme Judicial Council to release protesters, and of the Prime Minister's statement that all pensions would be paid in the days ahead. Given the difficulties over the last few months in reaching agreement on this critical position, it is of the utmost importance that all parties in Iraq work closely together, taking in account each other's concerns.

We are also pleased to note that the measures that the Government has undertaken to fight the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic are working. As with many other countries, the stringent steps taken, severe though they may be, have helped limit the country's number of COVID-19 cases and deaths, which is one of the lowest in the region. While these achievements contributed to the easing of curfew and lockdown in the last few days, it is necessary to continue applying the required measures to ensure that a second wave of infections does not occur in the weeks ahead.

While the pandemic is an immediate and severe challenge for Iraq, long-standing issues remain to be addressed. The pandemic has wreaked devastating consequences on every single Iraqi. The collapsing price of oil has further limited the scarce resources at the Government's disposal. Such tools are now increasingly overwhelmed by the magnitude of economic hardship and social instability that have been roiling the governorates and regions of Iraq. These difficulties threaten to reverse hard-won achievements in the country's economic development over the last few years. Recently, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) forecast that Iraq's gross domestic product would fall by 4.7 per cent this year. The Government had to ask IMF for debt deferment as budget deficit have grown exponentially.

Economic instability has been further compounded by political and security uncertainties. As the Secretary-General notes in his report (S/2020/363), there have been an increasing number of incidents caused by terrorists, including by those from the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS). The pandemic and the temporary suspension by the global coalition to defeat ISIS of some of its activities has created a breeding ground for the surge of terrorist acts. In this regard, we share the call for continued resources, attention and political will so as to sustain counter-terrorism efforts in Iraq.

We call upon all parties in Iraq to commit to sustained efforts aimed at achieving national reconciliation and at working together to come up with a comprehensive, long-term plan to address legitimate economic and political aspirations of the Iraqi people. It is important to engage in sincere dialogue that takes into account the interests and views of all parties, be they political or religious. Indeed, there would be more political certainty if the electoral law were officially promulgated.

We hope that efforts with regard to the return of Kuwaiti missing persons and properties, including the national archives, will be resumed as soon as the pandemic is properly addressed.

For the people and the Government of Iraq to address the aforementioned challenges, the international community must remain committed to providing further assistance and support to Iraq. Iraq's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity must be respected. We share the Secretary-General's call for international and regional partners to exercise restraint, pursue immediate de-escalation and support Iraq in its efforts to maintain security and stability.

Addressing the humanitarian situation in Iraq also remains a priority. We call for continued assistance by the United Nations, international organizations and Member States in this regard. We welcome the valuable contributions of a number of assistance partners and donors in the past few months.

Last but not least, we would like to express our appreciation for the efforts made by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNAMI in assisting the people and the Government of Iraq. Despite numerous difficulties, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and UNAMI have carried out a range of much-needed activities. Given the continuing instabilities in Iraq, we support the extension of the Mission's mandate in the days ahead.

Annex XV**Statement by the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, Mohammed Hussein Bahr Aluloom**

At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia, Sven Jürgenson, for assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also extend my sincere thanks to the Dominican Republic's Special Envoy to the Security Council, José Singer Weisinger, for his able management of the Council's work last month.

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

Allow me now to deliver the following statement on behalf of the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mustafa Al-Khadhimi.

“The challenges that Iraq faces in various fields, be they economic, security, health or social, are great, but they are no greater than our willingness to address them. All Iraqis, from Basra to Kurdistan, will work together to achieve stability and overcome these challenges. In this regard, I would recall our experience in fighting together to defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham (ISIS), also known as Da'esh.

“Members of my Government are aware of the many difficulties we are facing: a pandemic that could overwhelm a health system that had suffered long years of neglect and maldevelopment, an economic crisis that has been exacerbated by our dependence on oil, and a trust gap among several sectors of Iraqi society, in particular young people and public institutions, which has led to a large wave of protests since October 2019.

“We understand that taking up the responsibility to form a Government and lead the country in conditions such as these is not a privilege, but a test of our faith in our country and its people, and it is one from which we cannot shy away. My Government was formed in response to a political crisis, but it aspires to be a Government that brings about solutions. We will address the urgent problems. As I stated when I first announced my Government's programme, which has since been approved by the Iraqi Parliament, we believe that, in order to achieve the goal of finding solutions, some steps should be taken in advance.

“First of all, the sovereignty of the State must be preserved and honoured. Secondly, the rule of law must be strengthened, and the State must reclaim full control over the country's armed forces. Thirdly, we must work to prevent foreign Powers from transferring their conflicts and rivalries into Iraq, which has threatened our stability, and from using Iraq as a base to attack other countries. Iraq's sovereignty and independence are crucial to the stability and security of the region, which we think can be enhanced by establishing friendly relations with all countries.

“I believe it is important to briefly expand on the other priorities of my Government, as follows. The Government pledges to use all of the State's capabilities to combat the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, including supporting the specialized task force and providing medicines and medical equipment to the public, in addition to being open to international support and experience in this regard, as well as establishing a modern health-care system with a forward-looking vision.

“The Government pledges to enforce State authority by controlling the possession of arms and restricting possession of arms to Government and military institutions, and by enforcing the rule of law.

“The Government pledges to draft a special budget law that will tackle the current economic crisis and the plummeting of oil prices. This law should address the problems of all governorates, including those in the south, which have suffered deprivation, and those that have been destroyed by Da’esh, as well as in the Kurdistan region, focusing in general on the diversity of income sources.

“The Government pledges to initiate a frank and responsible national dialogue with all components of society in order to address the demands set forth by the peaceful protest movement and apply its national priorities. In addition, the Government will launch a comprehensive fact-finding and accountability campaign with respect to the violent incidents that accompanied the protests, so that those involved in shedding Iraqi blood may be prosecuted and so that martyrs’ families and the wounded may receive due care.

“The Government pledges to protect Iraq’s sovereignty and security and formulate a shared national vision to negotiate the presence of foreign forces in Iraq. This vision will operate within the framework of protecting the country’s security and continuing the fight against terrorism.

“The Government pledges to combat corruption by adopting legal mechanisms and practical steps to ensure protecting public assets, promoting the role of judicial institutions and recovering public funds inside and outside Iraq.

“The Government pledges to promote the values of citizenship and respect for religious, ethnic and national diversity in Iraq, rejecting any kind of religious, sectarian or nationality-based discrimination among citizens.

“With the intention of taking action on the aforementioned priorities, the Government, at its first Cabinet meeting, which took place on 9 May, adopted the following orders: to immediately release pension payments; to establish a truth-finding committee to investigate the violence perpetrated against peaceful demonstrators and bring redress to those who were harmed, hold perpetrators accountable and compensate the families of the martyrs and wounded persons; to release, in coordination with the Supreme Judicial Council, all detainees who participated in the demonstrations of October; to establish an experts committee to evaluate and provide recommendations on developing a legal framework for elections, present recommendations on the completion or amendment of the national electoral law and the best practices for supporting the Independent High Electoral Commission in organizing an early election; and to establish a special committee to prepare for the strategic dialogue with the United States of America in line with the goal of preserving Iraq national sovereignty.

“Fighting and countering terrorism is at the core of my Government’s security strategy as well as its purpose in paving the way for the reconstruction of liberated cities and the return of displaced citizens. To this end, we will lead negotiations with the global coalition to Defeat the Islamic State in Iraq and the Sham on the presence of the international troops in Iraq, based on a shared and inclusive national vision.

“Iraq welcomes all efforts undertaken so far to repatriate family members of foreign terrorist fighters and urges other countries to accept the return of

their non-convicted citizens. There is an urgent need for concerted efforts to be made to rehabilitate and integrate victims of terrorism, especially in the areas that have been recovered.

“Iraq confirms its strong commitment to establishing friendly relations and cooperation with our neighbours and the international community as a whole. In this context, cooperation with Kuwait remains one of Iraq’s top priorities. A large part of our effort centres around finding the missing Kuwaiti persons as well as finalizing and fulfilling our obligations towards their bereaved families. The Iraqi Ministry of Defence continues its efforts to excavate the remains at the sites at Samawah, Khamisiyah, Al-Radhwan, Karbala, Salman Pak and Al-Burjusiya. At the same time, Iraq calls on the Tripartite Commission and the State of Kuwait to accelerate the process to announce the results of the DNA tests of the remains of 47 missing persons found and handed over in August 2019.

“The ongoing and painstaking search efforts have led to the discovery of a new set of Kuwaiti archives. The Iraqi Ministry for Foreign Affairs was supposed to deliver those archives by April but, owing to the conditions occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic, the delivery has been postponed.

“With regard to compensation, a payment of \$440 million was made on 28 April, which leaves an outstanding balance of \$2.8 billion. This precarious situation puts Iraq in an extremely difficult position that no Government can maintain without international cooperation and solidarity. In these difficult circumstances, the formation of the new Government is further proof of the success of democracy in Iraq, where power was peacefully handed over in line with the Constitution.

“Accordingly, we aspire to having the Security Council support Iraq by helping the new Government achieve its priorities in the following ways: condemning violations of Iraq’s sovereignty by any Member State and preventing such acts in future; supporting the newly formed Government to address its principal challenges, especially with regard to COVID-19 and the economic and financial crisis; and actively cooperating with Iraq in the war against terrorism, in which Iraq still stands at the front line.

“Iraq commends the support being received from the international community and reiterates that helping the country preserve its national sovereignty will be a cornerstone of the success of the new Government.

“I extend my special appreciation to the Secretary-General for his supportive positions towards Iraq, and we hope that the international community will continue to support the people of my country in achieving a stable and prosperous Iraq. I offer special thanks to the Head of UNAMI and her team for their tireless efforts over the last 12 months. We look forward to the Security Council renewing the UNAMI mandate for another year.”