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Security Council

Seventieth year

Provisional

7589th meeting
Friday, 18 December 2015, 6.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Ms. Sison	(United States of America)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Santa Rosa
	Chad	Mr. Mahamat Zene
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Shen Bo
	France	Mr. Bertoux
	Jordan	Mrs. Kawar
	Lithuania	Mr. Baublys
	Malaysia	Mrs. Adnin
	New Zealand	Mr. Van Bohemen
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Safronkov
	Spain	Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Wilson
	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	Mr. Ramírez Carreño

Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Letter dated 11 December 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/963)

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The meeting was called to order at 6.45 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation concerning Iraq

Letter dated 11 December 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2015/963)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Iraq and Turkey to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Jeffrey Feltman, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2015/963, which contains a letter dated 11 December 2015 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Feltman.

Mr. Feltman: Since the closed-door briefing to the Security Council on 8 December by Assistant Secretary-General Miroslav Jenča on the Turkish troop deployment in northern Iraq, Baghdad and Ankara have held high-level bilateral discussions on the issue.

On 10 December, the Prime Minister of Iraq, Mr. Haider Al Abadi, met with a senior Turkish delegation. Dispatched by the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, the delegation was headed by the Turkish Under-Secretary of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Under-Secretary of the National Intelligence Service. Prime Minister Al Abadi stated after the meeting that he had reiterated earlier statements on the matter, and said that "the only way to resolve the crisis is the full withdrawal of Turkish troops from Iraqi territory". The delegation had, according to Mr. Davutoğlu, agreed "to rearrange the military personnel of the Turkish security force".

On 10 December, Turkish President Erdogan stated at a news conference that "the number of [Turkish] soldiers might increase or decrease depending on the number of Peshmerga being trained". The following day, on 11 December, Prime Minister Al Abadi issued a statement that he had instructed the Iraqi Ministry for Foreign Affairs "to submit a formal complaint... on the Turkish incursion" to the Security Council. On the same day, the Secretariat received a letter from the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mr. Ibrahim Al-Jaafari, dated 11 December 2015, calling on the Security Council

> "to order Turkey to withdraw its forces immediately and to ensure, by all available means, that those forces retreat immediately and unconditionally to the internationally recognized border of the two countries".

Also on 11 December, the Prime Minister of Iraq issued another statement on the situation and reiterated the position of his Government. In his statement, the Prime Minister reaffirmed "that [Iraq's] actions are not directed against the brotherly and neighbourly Turkish people".

On 14 December, Turkey publicly announced that some of its troops that had recently entered Iraq had begun leaving the Bashiqa area as part of a rearrangement. According to a 16 December statement from the Turkish General Staff, two Iraqis were killed and four Turkish troops were wounded when the training base in Bashiqa in northern Iraq was targeted by rocket fire from positions under the control of the Ilamic State in Iraq and the Levant.

The Secretary-General reiterates his hope that the Governments of Iraq and Turkey will exercise restraint, including in their public statements, and intensify their bilateral discussions to defuse tensions. He hopes that both sides will work towards reaching a mutual agreement as soon as possible. In that context, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq, Mr. Ján Kubiš, has been actively engaging the Government of Iraq and Turkish diplomatic representatives to discuss the situation. The Secretary-General urges all Member States involved in the fight against ISIL in Iraq to do so in manner that is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and that respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The President: I thank Mr. Feltman for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq.

Mr. Al-Jaafari (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate the United States on assuming the presidency of the Council for this month and on its efforts to organize and conduct the work of the Council in a transparent manner. I welcome this opportunity to brief the Secretariat and the Member States on the engagement of the Turkish troops in Iraqi territory without the consent of the Iraqi Government.

Amid heightened global sensitivity regarding the fight against the terrorist wave that has hit most parts of the world, on 3 December Turkish forces, estimated at hundreds of soldiers with a number of armoured vehicles, tanks and artilleries, penetrated northern Iraq to the depth of 110 kilometres without the official permission of the Iraqi federal authorities. This constitutes a serious violation of Iraqi sovereignty and the principles of international law relating to good-neighbourly relations, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of Member States, in accordance with Article 2 of the Charter of the United Nations.

The arguments presented to the media by Turkish officials to justify their violation of the borders of a sovereign neighbouring State are unacceptable to Iraq. Such military movements constitute a hostile act under established international rules and norms. Iraq rejects any military movements of a counter-terrorist nature without the knowledge and prior approval of the Iraqi federal authorities. Iraq has previously made this clear in its letters to the Security Council, which were reaffirmed again in a letter to the President of the Security Council dated 11 December 2015 (S/2015/963, annex).

While Iraq welcomes the efforts of the international community and its assistance to Iraq in its battle against Daesh, which controls some Iraqi cities, Iraq rejects any prejudice to its sovereignty. Counter-terrorism operations within the framework of the international coalition must be made with the knowledge of the Iraqi federal Government and after consultations with the Iraqi armed forces, and in full respect for the provisions of the Iraqi Constitution and the will and inclusivity of the elected national Government.

Failure to address any violation against Iraq's sovereignty will encourage other violations of its security and territorial integrity by other counties. Iraq has spared no effort and exhausted all diplomatic channels and bilateral negotiations with Turkey in order to persuade that country to withdraw its unauthorized forces from Iraq. On 6 December, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs summoned the Turkish Ambassador in Baghdad and presented him with an official protest, demanding that the Turkish Government issue a statement clarifying the circumstances and background of the incursion of the Turkish troops. Baghdad also received a delegation from Turkey and made it clear that Turkish troops that had entered the country without the consent of and coordination with the Iraqi federal Government must be withdrawn.

The Turkish delegation agreed in principle to withdraw, but asked for time to declare the withdtrawal after its return to Ankara. We were surprised that the delegation refused to withdraw those troops so as to end this serious violation of Iraqi sovereignty and security, which represents a flagrant violation of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the provisions of international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions. As Iraq is committed to the framework of international legitimacy represented by the Security Council, which has a unique responsibility in the maintenance of international peace and security, Iraq requests the Council to assume its international legal responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations and to adopt a clear and explicit resolution with the following provisions.

First, it must condemn the Turkish occupation and the illegal incursion against the will of a founding State Member of the United Nations — the State of Iraq — in breach of the rules and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the norms of international law. Secondly, it must demand that Turkey withdraw its troops immediately and ensure, by all available means and measures, their immediate and unconditional withdrawal to the internationally recognized borders between the two countries. It must also ensure the non-recurrence of such unilateral actions, which undermine international relations, exacerbate sectarian and nationalist tensions in the region, and expose regional and international security to significant risks.

We entrust the security, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq to the Council, which has stressed, in all of its resolutions, the inherent right of Member States, including Iraq, to individual or collective self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of

the United Nations, should it be subject to armed attack. Iraq will take all necessary measures to end such hostile acts, which are an affront to good-neighbourly relations and threaten international peace and security.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Turkey.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): We would have preferred this meeting to take place at a time other than when the international community is mobilizing all its resources to defeat Daesh. We can assure all present that Turkey has spared no effort to solve this matter bilaterally before it was taken up by the Security Council. The inviolability of borders, the preservation of territorial integrity and the political unity of States are the main principles of Turkey's foreign policy. Because we are extremely sensitive in matters concerning our own sovereignty and territorial integrity, we treat others the way we want to be treated. Those principles apply to Iraq more than to any country. In fact, our sensitivities concerning Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity have in the past even created tensions in our relations with some of our closest allies and partners.

Turkey and Iraq are linked by unbreakable bonds. Historically, geographically and culturally, we share a common past and we look forward to our common future. Iraq needs friends to help it defeat Daesh without delay. Turkey is one of them. Turkey is currently hosting almost 500,000 Iraqis. All their humanitarian needs are being met by the Turkish Government. We also continue to dispatch humanitarian assistance to Iraq and to the three camps that we have built in the area under the control of the Kurdistan Regional Government, hosting nearly 40,000 internally displaced persons. A sustainable end to the tragedy in Iraq can be achieved only by defeating Daesh. The critical step in that regard is to raise the military capability of Iraqi forces, including through military training.

Turkey has extended military assistance to Iraq since the beginning of the Daesh occupation of Mosul. That has been taking place at various levels, one being the training camp in Bashiqa, Mosul. We set up that camp in conjunction with the local authorities and upon the request of the Iraqi Government. In Bashiqa, members of the Turkish military have been training Iraqi volunteers who will constitute the core of the Mosul national guard. Back in 2014, the Iraqi Army did not have the trust of the local population in Anbar or Mosul, and it was apparently very reluctant to fight. That led to a rapid collapse of the defence against Daesh in Mosul in June 2014. At that time, we all agreed on the formation of the national guard units. It is hard to accept the notion that Turkey's military training efforts in Iraq have gone unnoticed. We have informed our partners and Iraqi officials of it on various occasions. Owing to the increasing threats to our military personnel in Bashiqa, we decided to reinforce the force protection component of our units in the camp.

Unfortunately, that issue has been taken out of context and the number of troops that was dispatched exaggerated. Taking into consideration the Iraqi side's concerns, Turkey immediately took steps to de-escalate the matter. In that regard, we immediately stopped all further reinforcements in Bashiqa. On 5 December, our Defence Minister spoke to his Iraqi counterpart and assured him that there would be no further reinforcements in Bashiqa until the concerns of the Iraqi Government were answered. On 6 December, Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu sent a letter to his counterpart, Haidar Al Abadi, on the issue and clearly explained the role and functions of the Turkish personnel in Bashiqa. On 8 December, Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu spoke to his Iraqi counterpart and provided him with a detailed explanation that our military personnel in Bashiqa had not been given any combat role. On 10 December, the Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry and the Chief of Intelligence visited Baghdad as special envoys of Prime Minister Davutoğlu and conducted extensive talks with Prime Minister Al Abadi, Foreign Minister Ja-afari and Defence Minister Al-Obeidi. In those meetings, our respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq was reconfirmed. Our determination to maintain the support that we have been providing to the Iraqi Government in its struggle against Daesh was also reaffirmed.

On 11 December, as a result of the meetings of our envoys and taking into consideration the concerns of the Iraqi Government voiced in those meetings, a statement was issued by the Prime Minister's office. In that statement, we announced Turkey's readiness to adjust the number of our military personnel in Bashiqa. After that statement's release, we immediately began rearranging the number of troops in Bashiqa. The additional security elements there left the camp on 14 December. It will be recognized that all those steps to de-escalate the situation and reach a common understanding have been launched by the Turkish side,

while the Iraqi authorities preferred to express their position through the press.

We are convinced that the measures we employed would have been sufficient to leave that issue behind and refocus our efforts on fighting Daesh. We also believe that our statements created enough breathing space for the Iraqi Government to implement a new mechanism for discussing all aspects of our cooperation in the area of security. Unfortunately, that has not been the case. From the outset, we tried to resolve that matter through bilateral channels, because bringing the issue to various international platforms would serve no other purpose than to undermine the solidarity of the international community against Daesh.

The allegations concerning this issue and attempts to bring it before international forums have put our troops in Bashiqa at risk. The Daesh attack on our unit on 16 December substantiated Turkey's concerns about the safety of its troops in Bashiqa. Unfortunately, two Iraqis were killed in the attack, and four others were wounded. Four members of the Turkish military contingent were also injured. That attack also justified Turkey's decision to reinforce its military presence in the camp. In the immediate aftermath of Iraq's reaction against our troop movements, Minister Çavuşoğlu asked his Iraqi counterpart whether the Iraqi Army was capable of protecting our military personnel against Daesh.

Now, in response to those who questioned Turkey's intentions and the necessity of dispatching a security force, we would like to pose that question one more time. Will the Iraqi armed forces be able to prevent attacks against our trainers in Bashiqa after we have relocated the security detachment there? As we prepared for this meeting, Turkish troops, which the Iraqi Government claims have violated the sovereignty of Iraq by their presence in Bashiqa, were actually defending it against a terrorist organization in retaliation to the attacks it launched. Our units in the camp destroyed approximately a dozen artillery positions, command posts, observation posts and approximately 40 vehicles that were at the disposal of Daesh. Does the Iraqi Government want us to halt such actions and leave?

The whole point of the international campaign to support the Iraqi Government is to help Iraq to build and reform its own defensive capabilities. Ultimately, through those efforts, our collective aim is to empower the Iraqi Government to re-establish its legal authority over the whole country.

Turkey has been under attack not only by Daesh but also by the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) terrorist organization. Its headquarters are based in the Qandil region of Iraq. We have been calling on the Iraqi Government to stop the activities of the PKK. Each time, the response we have received has been that the Iraqi Government had no control over that part of the country. If the Iraqi Government claims that it has full sovereignty over all its territory, then it is our right to expect that it will prevent the use of Iraqi soil for terrorist attacks against our own territory. However, both Daesh and the PKK continue to pose significant threats to Turkey's safety and security from areas beyond the reach of the Iraqi Government, and it is our right to exercise self-defence.

We understand the difficult political environment in which the Iraqi Government functions. However, that should not be an excuse to limit the assistance offered to that country to defeat Daesh more quickly. On the ground, the Popular Mobilization Forces number 130,000, are armed with tanks, artillery, rocket launchers and even unmanned air vehicles. Those forces are far stronger than the Iraqi Army and not under the effective control of the Iraqi Government. Turkey has provided more than 2,400 overflight clearances for cargo aircraft carrying military equipment to Iraq. This is only part of the total military assistance that Iraq has received and purchased.

Yet, the Iraqi Government has not been able to reform and restructure the Iraqi Army or train and equip a mere 5,000 volunteers in Anbar. That is not a logistical problem. That is a matter of political will. There seems to be a determination in Baghdad not to allow and support any armed force that is not part of the Popular Mobilization Forces. It is therefore not surprising at all that the closure of the training programme in Bashiqa is being sought, or that those started by the coalition in Anbar have been delayed or stalled so successfully. We are concerned that the Government of Iraq is repeating the mistakes of its predecessor. It is that attitude that puts the sovereignty of Iraq at risk.

We have said it before, we will say it again, and we will keep repeating it until we put an end to all the baseless allegations — Turkey has never had and will never have any interest in violating Iraq's sovereignty, nor do we, unlike others, have any plans or ambitions for

Iraqi territory. We are sure that the discussion here today is being followed with great interest and satisfaction in places like Raqqa, Mosul and Damascus by those who would like to see the cooperation and cohesion of the international coalition against Daesh disrupted. In many others, it is being followed with concern and regret. Ankara is one of them. We are certain that is also true for most of the capitals represented around the table.

Let us put an end to this discussion here today and carry on the work at hand. Let us defeat Daesh. Turkey will continue to combat Daesh as a national and global security threat, in cooperation and coordination with all its partners in this fight.

The President: I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 7.10 p.m.