

Africa

1. The situation concerning Western Sahara

During the period under review, the Council held one meeting and adopted one resolution in connection with the situation concerning Western Sahara. In that meeting, the Council adopted resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#).¹ In addition, Council members held one private (closed) meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#).² More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is provided in the table below. Council members also held informal consultations of the whole in connection with the item.³

On 27 October, having considered the report of the Secretary-General,⁴ the Council adopted resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), by which it extended the mandate of MINURSO for a period of one year, until 31 October 2023.⁵ The resolution was adopted with 13 votes in favour and 2 abstentions.⁶ In the resolution, the Council expressed its full support for the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for Western Sahara to facilitate the negotiations process in order to achieve a solution to the Western Sahara question, building on the progress and framework of the former Personal Envoy.⁷ The Council noted with deep concern the breakdown of the ceasefire and, in that regard, called upon the parties to comply fully with the military agreements reached with MINURSO.⁸ The Council also called upon the parties to resume negotiations under the auspices of the Secretary-General without preconditions and in good faith, taking into account the efforts made since 2006 and subsequent developments with a view to achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, which would provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara.⁹ The Council also noted with deep concern the continued hardships faced by Sahrawi refugees, their dependency on external humanitarian assistance, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the insufficient funding for those living in Tindouf refugee camps and the risks associated with the reduction of food assistance.¹⁰

Following the adoption of the resolution, several Council members took the floor to explain their votes. Among those abstaining, the representative of Kenya expressed regret that resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#) continued a gradual but noticeable shift away from the mandate of MINURSO, which would not assist the parties in achieving a just, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution, as originally intended.¹¹ He expressed further regret that the proposals made by Kenya during the negotiations had not been taken on board and expressed his concern that the adopted resolution did not substantively reflect the Council's commitment – as reflected in resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#) and in previous resolutions – to “provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara in the context of arrangements consistent with the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and noting the role and responsibilities of the parties in this respect”.¹² He further observed that the African Union, which counted both parties as its members, should not be ignored by any United Nations process, if only based on adherence to Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. He said that the Personal Envoy should make every effort to cooperate with

¹ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II.

² The private meeting was held on 10 October in connection with the item entitled “Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#), annex II, sections A and B”; see [S/PV.9148](#). See also [A/77/2](#), part II, chap. 21.

³ See [A/77/2](#), part II, chap. 3.

⁴ [S/2022/733](#). See also the letter dated 17 October from the representative of South Africa to the President of the Security Council ([S/2022/797](#)).

⁵ Resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of MINURSO, see part X, sect. I.

⁶ See [S/PV.9168](#).

⁷ Resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#), para. 3.

⁸ *Ibid.*, thirteenth preambular paragraph and para. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, para. 4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, twenty-second preambular paragraph.

¹¹ See [S/PV.9168](#).

¹² Resolution [2602 \(2021\)](#), seventh preambular paragraph. Resolution [2654 \(2022\)](#) contained the language quoted in its sixth preambular paragraph and in paragraph 4.

the African Union to find ways to bring all parties to a common position protective of peace, security and the holding of the agreed referendum. The representative of the Russian Federation echoed the representative of Kenya, stating that the process of preparing and agreeing on the adopted resolution had not been fully consultative, adding that a number of useful proposals by other Council members had also gone unheeded and that, as a result, the resolution was not balanced.¹³ He also indicated that, in the past few years, the resolutions on the renewal of the mandate of MINURSO had included amendments that harmed the unbiased and impartial approach needed to resolve the issue of Western Sahara. He added that resolution 2654 (2022) did not reflect the real situation on the ground and was unlikely to facilitate the efforts of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy to resume the direct negotiation process between Morocco and the Frente Popular para la Liberación de Saguia el-Hamra y de Río de Oro (Frente POLISARIO) in order to reach a mutually acceptable solution. He questioned the vague language used to define the direct participants in the conflict and the Western Sahara peace process. He also considered the numerous references to the round-table format, which was irrelevant and limited the mediation activities of the Personal Envoy, to be misplaced. He added that the text of the resolution did not reflect the continuing issue of access by United Nations entities to the territory of Western Sahara in order to provide humanitarian assistance to the civilian population there. In concluding, he underscored that his delegation's position with respect to the voting was attributable solely to a disagreement with the wording of the resolution and reflected an assessment of the work of the penholder. He reiterated his country's consistent support for MINURSO and its Head and for the key stabilizing role that it played in creating favourable conditions on the ground for the resumption of dialogue between the parties in order to advance the peace process.

Among the delegations voting in favour, the representative of the United States expressed regret that the Council had not been unanimous in support of renewing the mandate of MINURSO, as unity greatly enhanced United Nations efforts to achieve peace. He called upon all concerned to engage with the Personal Envoy in good faith, adding that a political solution was vital to promoting a peaceful and prosperous future for the people of Western Sahara and the region. He further stated that his delegation continued to view the Moroccan autonomy plan as serious, credible and realistic, and one potential approach to satisfying those aspirations. The representative of China expressed the hope that future Council resolutions on the extension of the mandate of MINURSO could reflect the latest changes in the situation, based on in-depth consultations, so as to arrive at a text that was acceptable to the relevant parties and that consensus could be achieved at an early date on the next steps in the political process of the question of Western Sahara. The representative of Brazil noted that, notwithstanding its many virtues, the text could have greatly benefited from a more balanced approach with regard to some of its innovative propositions, which could have proven useful in bridging some of the gaps seen during the negotiations. The representatives of the United Arab Emirates and Gabon expressed their support for the Moroccan autonomy plan, which presented credible prospects that allowed for a solution in line with the Charter, as a way out of the current impasse and also for a mutually acceptable political solution to be reached.

Meeting: the situation concerning Western Sahara, 2022

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.9168 27 October	Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2022/733)	Draft resolution submitted by United States (S/2022/801)			Seven Council members ^a	Resolution 2654 (2022) 13-0-2 ^b

^a Brazil, China, Gabon, Kenya, Russian Federation, United Arab Emirates and United States.

^b For: Albania, Brazil, China, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States; against: none; abstaining: Kenya, Russian Federation.

¹³ See [S/PV.9168](#).