

24. The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

During the period under review, the Security Council held 15 meetings in connection with the item entitled “The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question”. The Council continued to hear monthly briefings and hold quarterly open debates to consider this item.³⁸⁸ In addition, the Council held two unscheduled briefings and failed to adopt two competing draft resolutions in connection with the situation in the Gaza Strip. Under this item, the Council also considered developments in Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen and the overall political situation in the Middle East.³⁸⁹ More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.

During 2018, the Council heard briefings in most meetings held under this item by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General. The Council also heard briefings, on occasion, by the Secretary-General, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs and the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. In the context of the monthly briefings, the Special Coordinator reported on the deteriorating situation in the Gaza Strip, the developments in the West Bank with regard to settlement activities and violence, the situation in the Golan Heights, the regional dynamics and the status of the peace process. During those briefings, concerns were also raised over the funding for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. On 20 February 2018, in the context of a monthly briefing to the Council under this item, the President of the State of Palestine, Mahmoud Abbas, was invited to participate (the representative of Israel was also invited to participate).³⁹⁰ At that meeting, Mr. Abbas called for an international conference to form a multilateral mechanism in support of the parties to negotiate all permanent status issues as defined by the Oslo Accords, within a specific time frame and to secure full United Nations membership for the State of Palestine and mutual recognition of

Palestinian and Israeli statehood along the 1967 lines.³⁹¹

Every three months, briefings were also used to report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016). During those briefings, which took place in March, June, September and December, the Special Coordinator reported on the Israeli settlement activities, on the violence against civilians, including acts of terror, incitement, provocation and inflammatory rhetoric, on the steps and efforts to advance the peace process and on the actions taken by all States to distinguish, in their relevant dealings, between the territory of the State of Israel and the territories occupied since 1967. On 14 May 2018, 10 Council members addressed a letter to the Secretary-General in which they noted the practice of presenting oral reports on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) and requested the Secretary-General to circulate a written report thereon.³⁹² On 18 June 2018, the Secretary-General presented the sixth quarterly report on the implementation of resolution 2334 (2016) in written form.³⁹³ No other written report was presented during the period under review. On 21 December 2018, 10 Council members and 3 incoming members addressed a letter to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council with reference to the letter sent on 14 May concerning the lack of implementation of resolution 2334 (2016).³⁹⁴ In the letter, the signatories reaffirmed their conviction that written reports would contribute to furthering the implementation of the resolution. They also expressed their expectation of receiving written reports at least every second reporting occasion, and once again requested the Secretary-General to circulate a written report on the implementation of the resolution to the Council prior to its meetings designated for the follow-up to resolution 2334 (2016).

Concerning the situation in the Gaza Strip and in response to the rise in violence in March and May 2018, the Council held additional meetings, in the context of which Council members heard a briefing by the Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, on 30 March, and by the Special Coordinator, on 15 May. At the meeting of 30 March, the Assistant Secretary-General reported to the Council that about 30,000 people had participated in the so-called Great March of

³⁸⁸ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

³⁸⁹ For more information, see part I, sect. 23, “The situation in the Middle East”.

³⁹⁰ For more information on participation, see part II, sect. VII.

³⁹¹ S/PV.8183, pp. 8–9.

³⁹² S/2018/454.

³⁹³ S/2018/614.

³⁹⁴ S/2018/1150.

Return at various locations in Gaza, resulting in violence. He also reported that violence had broken out in the West Bank, with an estimated 900 Palestinians demonstrating, mostly in central West Bank cities, such as Ramallah and Hebron.³⁹⁵ An additional meeting was also held on 15 May, against the backdrop of the violence that had erupted further to the demonstrations as part of the Great March of Return as well as in protest of the relocation of the United States Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem the day before.³⁹⁶ At the meeting, the Special Coordinator informed the Council about the clashes in the West Bank and the deteriorating situation, with reports indicating that at least 60 people had been killed and 1,300 injured.³⁹⁷ At the monthly briefing held on 19 November 2018, the Special Coordinator informed the Council of the efforts of his team to ensure a return to the 2014 ceasefire agreement further to the escalation of violence in the period from 11 to 13 November triggered by an operation of the Israel Defense Forces inside the Gaza Strip in which a local commander of the Hamas Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and six other Palestinians had been killed.³⁹⁸

During 2018, the Council held open debates every quarter, in January, April, July and October. At those meetings, Council members and Member States alike considered the Israeli settlement activity, the security situation in the West Bank and the deteriorating humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip. Speakers also focused on the decision of the United States to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, as well as on its decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

Amid the worsening security situation in the Gaza Strip following the Great March of Return, on 1 June 2018, the Council failed to adopt two competing draft resolutions, sponsored by Kuwait³⁹⁹ and the

United States,⁴⁰⁰ respectively. Before the vote, the representative of the United States affirmed that the draft resolution presented by Kuwait represented “a grossly one-sided view” of what had taken place in Gaza and warned that, regardless of how others chose to vote, the United States would oppose the draft resolution and would veto it. She added that in spite of the responsibility of Hamas for the awful living conditions in Gaza, the diversion of humanitarian assistance into military infrastructure and attacks on humanitarian access points, as well as its refusal to cooperate with the Palestinian Authority to unite in the pursuit of peace, the draft resolution sponsored by Kuwait made no mention of Hamas.⁴⁰¹ The draft resolution sponsored by Kuwait was voted on first and was not adopted owing to the negative vote of the United States, a permanent member of the Council. In her statement after the vote, the representative of the United Kingdom affirmed that both draft resolutions contained elements that were either imbalanced or too vague to be viable; while the draft resolution sponsored by Kuwait failed to name terrorist actors, the draft resolution sponsored by the United States did not adequately reference the responsibilities and obligations of Israel with regard to Gaza.⁴⁰² Other members of the Council also raised concerns regarding each of the texts presented.⁴⁰³ The draft resolution sponsored by the United States was then put to a vote and was not adopted, having failed to obtain the required number of votes, with one vote in favour, by the United States. In the explanation of the vote that ensued, some members of the Council voiced concerns about the lack of prior negotiations and regretted the absence of a more holistic consideration of the situation in Gaza in the text presented by the United States.⁴⁰⁴

³⁹⁵ S/PV.8219, pp. 2–3.

³⁹⁶ S/PV.8256.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 2–4.

³⁹⁸ S/PV.8405, pp. 2–4.

³⁹⁹ S/2018/516.

⁴⁰⁰ S/2018/520.

⁴⁰¹ S/PV.8274, pp. 2–3.

⁴⁰² Ibid., p. 5.

⁴⁰³ Ibid., pp. 10–11 (Netherlands) and pp. 11–12 (Ethiopia).

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 9 (France), p. 9 (Peru), p. 10 (Sweden) and p. 11 (Kazakhstan).

Meetings: the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

<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.8167 25 January 2018			30 Member States ^a	Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine to the United Nations, Permanent Observer of the observer State of the Holy See to the United Nations, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States to the United Nations, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People	All Council members, all invitees ^b	
S/PV.8183 20 February 2018			Israel	Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, President of the observer State of Palestine	Secretary-General, all Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8214 26 March 2018				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	Seven Council members, ^c invitee ^d	
S/PV.8219 30 March 2018				Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine	All Council members, all invitees	
S/PV.8244 26 April 2018			31 Member States ^e	Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Head of the Delegation of the European Union, Vice-Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine, Permanent Observer of the observer State of the Holy See, Permanent Observer for the League of Arab States	All Council members, all invitees ^f	

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<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.8256 15 May 2018			Israel	Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	All Council members, all invitees ^d	
S/PV.8265 23 May 2018				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	Kazakhstan, invitee ^d	
S/PV.8274 1 June 2018		Draft resolution submitted by Kuwait (S/2018/516); draft resolution submitted by United States (S/2018/520)	Israel	Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine	13 Council members, ^g all invitees	Draft resolution S/2018/516 not adopted 10-1-4 ^h Draft resolution S/2018/520 not adopted 1-3-11 ⁱ
S/PV.8289 19 June 2018				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	Invitee	
S/PV.8316 24 July 2018			25 Member States ^j	Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Permanent Observer of the observer State of the Holy See	All Council members, all invitees ^k	
S/PV.8329 22 August 2018				Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs	Invitee	
S/PV.8358 20 September 2018				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	All Council members, invitee	

**Part I. Consideration of questions under the responsibility of
the Security Council for the maintenance of
international peace and security**

<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.8375 and S/PV.8375 (Resumption 1) 18 October 2018			28 Member States ^l	Permanent Observer of the observer State of Palestine, Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Executive Director of B'Tselem, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union, Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States, Permanent Observer of the observer State of the Holy See	All Council members, ^m all invitees ⁿ	
S/PV.8405 19 November 2018				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	All Council members, invitee ^d	
S/PV.8429 18 December 2018				Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process	All Council members, invitee	

^a Argentina, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Estonia, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

^b The Special Coordinator participated in the meeting via videoconference from Jerusalem. Maldives was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs. The representative of Turkey spoke on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the representative of the United Arab Emirates spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States; the representative of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

^c Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Kuwait, United Kingdom and United States.

^d The Special Coordinator participated in the meeting via videoconference from Jerusalem.

^e Bahrain, Bangladesh, Botswana, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

^f The representative of Iraq spoke on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the representative of Tunisia spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States; the representative of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; and the Head of the Delegation of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine.

^g Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

^h *For*: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Peru, Russian Federation, Sweden; *against*: United States; *abstaining*: Ethiopia, Netherlands, Poland, United Kingdom.

ⁱ *For*: United States; *against*: Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Kuwait, Russian Federation; *abstaining*: China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom.

^j Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

^k The Special Coordinator participated in the meeting via videoconference from Jerusalem. The representative of Bangladesh spoke on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the representative of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement; and the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union spoke on behalf of the European Union and its member States, as well as Albania, Liechtenstein, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

^l Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Japan, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Namibia, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey, Uruguay, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Viet Nam.

^m Kazakhstan was represented by its Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.

ⁿ The Special Coordinator joined via videoconference from Jerusalem. The representative of Bangladesh spoke on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation; the representative of Oman spoke on behalf of the Group of Arab States; and the representative of Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) spoke on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

25. The situation concerning Iraq

During 2018, the Security Council held five meetings and adopted one resolution in connection with the situation concerning Iraq. With the unanimous adoption of resolution [2421 \(2018\)](#), the Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) for a period of 10 months, until 31 May 2019.⁴⁰⁵ Except for one, all meetings under this item during the period under review took the form of briefings.⁴⁰⁶ More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers and outcomes, is given in the table below.

During the period under review, the Council heard briefings on a quarterly basis by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq and Head of UNAMI on the situation in Iraq. Against the backdrop of the defeat of Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh), the Special Representative briefed the Council on the holding and status of parliamentary elections, as well as on the activities of UNAMI in the areas of political dialogue and national reconciliation. In that regard, the Special Representative noted that the voluntary and dignified return of internally displaced persons, under conditions of safety and security, was critical for the success and credibility of the elections.⁴⁰⁷ He also briefed the Council on the public protests following allegations of electoral fraud and mismanagement of the parliamentary elections.⁴⁰⁸ The Special Representative also made reference to the question of missing Kuwaiti and third-country nationals and property.⁴⁰⁹ During his final briefing to the Council, the Special Representative reported that the Special Adviser and

Head of the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant had arrived in Iraq on 30 October.⁴¹⁰

The Under-Secretary-General of the Office of Counter-Terrorism and the Executive Director of the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate gave one briefing to the Council, on the joint visit to Iraq in March 2018 and the dispatch of a joint scoping mission by the Office and the Executive Directorate at the beginning of May 2018 to identify specific elements of programmatic support to the Government of Iraq.⁴¹¹

The Permanent Observer and Head of the Delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to the United Nations also gave one briefing to the Council, on the topic of missing persons from the 1991 Gulf War and the work of the tripartite mechanism, chaired by ICRC, to trace the persons still unaccounted for as a result of the conflict.⁴¹² At the same meeting, a representative of the Women Empowerment Organization in Iraq and coordinator of the Iraqi cross-sector task force for the implementation of Security Council resolution [1325 \(2000\)](#) gave a briefing to the Council on the situation of women in Iraq and the work of the task force in its development of a national action plan.⁴¹³

At the five above-mentioned meetings, Council members discussed the progress of national elections, the overall political process and the reconstruction efforts in the context of the progressive liberation and recovery of territories that were under the control of

⁴⁰⁵ Resolution [2421 \(2018\)](#), para. 1. For more information on the mandate of UNAMI, see part X, sect. II.

⁴⁰⁶ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

⁴⁰⁷ [S/PV.8184](#), p. 2.

⁴⁰⁸ [S/PV.8324](#), p. 2.

⁴⁰⁹ [S/PV.8184](#), p. 3; [S/PV.8271](#), p. 4; and [S/PV.8324](#), p. 4.

⁴¹⁰ [S/PV.8396](#), p. 3. For more information, see part VI, sect. II, "Investigation of disputes and fact-finding", and part IX, sect. III, "Investigative bodies".

⁴¹¹ [S/PV.8271](#), pp. 4–7.

⁴¹² [S/PV.8324](#), pp. 4–5.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.