

Delegation from the Republic of South Africa
Position Paper for the Security Council

The issues before the Security Council are: Youth, Peace and Security; Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts; and The Situation in Myanmar. In order to fulfill the words of the founding father of South African democracy, President Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, who stated that "[t]he millions across our globe who stand expectant at the gates of hope look to this organisation [the United Nations], to bring them peace, to bring them life, to bring them a life worth living", South Africa looks forward to productive and cooperative discussions on the urgent issues before us.

I. Youth, Peace and Security

As noted in the 2018 Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, more than 400 million youth are affected by armed conflict. Their human rights are violated, and they are in increased risk of being injured, forced to flee, abducted, raped or even killed, often times being the most vulnerable in conflict. But they must be seen by the United Nations (UN) as agents and drivers of positive change and peace-building, not merely as victims of armed conflict. We should aim at allowing meaningful inclusion of the youth as equal partners in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation, negotiation and peace-building. It is clear that the multifaceted nature of the issue requires action on various dimensions, as is made clear in the Progress Study. To work towards that goal, we hosted the Voices of Young People in East and Southern Africa conference in Johannesburg in 2017 and continue to strive to ensure that young people's voices are heard.

South Africa views the African Youth Charter of the African Union (AU) as its strategic framework for empowering and including the youth. Further, we commend the AU's Silencing the Guns by 2020 initiative and see it as critical to ending conflict on the African continent, under which the youth suffers the most. We strongly agree with the sentiment expressed in Security Council resolution 2250 (2015) that young people play a central and positive role in advancing peace and security internationally. South Africa welcomes and shares the conclusions reached in the Progress Study on Youth, Peace and Security, transmitted to the General Assembly and the Security Council by the Secretary-General pursuant this resolution. We would also like to recall Security Council resolution 2282 (2016), which stresses the inclusion and participation of youth in peacebuilding efforts.

To foster a cultural shift and in order to mainstream youth participation, we propose the creation of an annual Youth in Peace conference to be held at UN Headquarters, starting in August of this year. The conference will bring together youths who act as mediators, community organizers, humanitarian workers and peace activists in conflict zones around the world. Central aim of the conference is to provide a mechanism for involving the youth by bringing them together with all relevant UN agencies which are concerned with peace-building and development, and diplomats employed at the respective institutions. The conference shall produce a report with key recommendations of the youth, which will be reported to the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Secretary-General and other UN bodies. Furthermore, we propose to create special training programs for the youth within the Department of Peace Operations (DPO), recognizing the need to invest in their human capital to bring about sustainable peace.

II. Threats to International Peace and Security Caused by Terrorist Acts

Terrorism on of the foremost threats to international security, and peacekeeping missions remain one of the most effective means available to the UN to fight it, as well as to promote and maintain international peace and security. We remain committed to international cooperation in fighting terrorism and are convinced of the centrality of the UN's counter-terrorism bodies in assisting Member States in that fight. Cooperation between them and regional bodies, such as the African Union (AU), is essential. A prominent example is the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), mandated by the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC), which battles Boko Haram in the Lake Chad region. The AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the G5 Sahel, also mandated by the PSC, are other significant contributions to peace and security, seeking to stabilize regions which are especially threatened by terrorism. The ability and willingness of the AU to engage in peace enforcement missions on the African continent are of unparalleled importance to the UN due to its ability to intervene rapidly and dynamically in the interests

of global peace and security, a quality peacekeeping operations under the Department of Peace Operations (DPO) lack. Yet a lack of fiscal means and other resources continues to jeopardize their aim at pacification and countering terrorism.

We wish to emphasize that the cooperation of international organizations in partnership peacekeeping is a necessity, as noted *inter alia* in Security Council report 446 (2015). We also wish to recall Security Council resolution 2378 (2017), which reiterates the Council's intent to provide more support to peacekeeping missions particularly in cooperation with the African Union, under the condition that certain standards are met. South Africa views the record-high endowment of \$ 131 Million of the AU Peace Fund, through which the AU aims at financing at least 25% of future joint peacekeeping operations, and significant advancements in human rights compliance and financial governance on current and future missions as critical successes which will enable closer cooperation between the AU and UN in the future.

To assist the AU in its efforts to keep peace on the African continent, we propose that vital AU-led peace operations will be sustainably and predictably financed by UN assessed contributions. We propose a 25:75 funding split between the AU and the UN for future Security-Council authorized AU-led missions. We further propose that troop contributions by AU will be treated as in-kind payment towards the 25% share of funding. In order to ensure oversight over financial governance and human rights compliance, force commanders will be required to report to both the AU and the UN, where the General Assembly's Fifth Committee and the Human Rights Council will have the ability to assess its performance. Adding to this, we propose joint performance reviews and an institutional framework to report, investigate and punish any violations to ensure compliance with humanitarian law.

III. The Situation in Myanmar

South Africa has consistently expressed its condemnation of the human rights situation in Myanmar and called for an end to the suffering experienced by the Rohingya people. The grotesque violations of human rights in Myanmar's Rakhine state are clearly illegal under international humanitarian law and indefensible. Not only is South Africa's foreign policy guided by humanitarian principles, but we have a deeper empathy to the plight of the Rohingya and the denial of their human rights due to our own history. Standing as one of the greatest triumphs of human rights in the 20th century, the peacefully negotiated transition from apartheid South Africa to a multiracial, free democracy was only possible due to strong international support by the international community and especially the Security Council. We have in the past appealed to the Government of Myanmar to uphold the rights of all of those living within its borders and expressed optimism about its willingness and ability to do so, but the uncooperative stance of the Government of Myanmar and the deterioration of the human rights situation have led us to believe that the onus is now squarely on the shoulders of the Security Council to take decisive action in support of the Rohingya.

South Africa supports the results of the Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar (IIFMM) and the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar (IIMM). Further, we agree on the set of recommendations developed by the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State in its final report in August 2017 and presented to the Security Council, especially the review of Myanmar's citizenship law and no restrictions of the human rights of the Rohingya people. Yet we are saddened by the fact that the Myanmar government's commission to implement them has so far failed to do so. Having supported the strong condemnation of Myanmar's policy in General Assembly resolution 74/246 (2019), which also cites from the IIFMM, we are looking forward to supporting a similar resolution in the Security Council.

We urge the Security Council to pass a resolution formally condemning the actions of the Myanmar Army and recognizing the human rights abuses suffered by the Rohingya. Above all, we call for an open discussion over the role of the Security Council with regard to the Situation in Myanmar so far. Critically, South Africa remains vigilant to ensure that a country-specific resolution will not be used to engage in regime change or destabilization in Myanmar. However, we believe that it is due for the Security Council to express its support of the work of the Secretary-General and various other UN bodies have done to tackle the human rights situation in Myanmar.