

Delegation from the United Mexican States

Position Paper for the Security Council

The topics before the United Nations (UN) Security Council (SC) are: Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security; and Protection of Civilian in Armed Conflict. The United Mexican States, as a current non-permanent member of the SC is strongly committed to international peace and security efforts by actively advocating multilateralism and compliance to International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Therefore, Mexico is in support of all solutions and resolutions to the above-mentioned topics.

I. Impact of COVID-19 on Peace and Security

With a death toll close to six million people and over 400 million cases, the COVID-19 pandemic triggered a worldwide crisis of unprecedented magnitude in which even the richest and most stable countries are struggling to get its effects on the economic and healthcare sector under control. The two billion people that, according to Oxfam, are living in conflict-ridden areas, often do not have any access to sanitation or hospitals, thereby worsening their already precarious situation by being disproportionately exposed to the risks of a COVID-19 infection. An unparalleled mortality rate and rising food as well as overall insecurity due to shortfalls of humanitarian aid and restrictions for Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) caused by the pandemic, show the close linkage between COVID-19, peace, and security.

Mexico responds to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the international community guided by its multilateral orientation as well as the protection and promotion of human rights, which is rooted in Article 89 of the constitution of the United Mexican States and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948). As the pandemic multiplies already existing threats to human rights and the security of civilians in conflict-ridden areas, Mexico emphasizes the importance of Resolution 2532 (2020) and its demand to stop all hostilities, as well as the Secretary-Generals call for an international cease fire. In line with Mexico's feminist foreign policy and the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted by the General Assembly (GA) Resolution 70/1 (2015), Mexico actively advocates the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda adopted by SC Resolution 1325 (2000). Followingly, to ensure the decrease of hostilities and enable effective pandemic response in areas where states policies and the rule of law are no longer applicable, Mexico reinforces the adoption of Resolution 2535 (2020) and encourages the increased engagement of women, young people and local Civil Society Organisations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts. To promote multilateralism and the importance of cooperation among nations and other stakeholders in conflict areas, Mexico drafted the GA Resolution 74/274 (2020), ensuring global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment that severely lacks in regions where war keeps on raging.

The United Mexican States call for an international ceasefire in line with Resolution 2532, acknowledging the disastrous impact of COVID-19 on conflict regions. Furthermore, Mexico calls upon all Member States to further provide financial means to finance PKOs. Although the pandemic damped economic development in all countries, the peace, security, and survival of vulnerable groups in conflict regions is in danger by the hindered ability of peacekeepers to work in fragile areas due to movement and contact restrictions as well as the rising necessity for humanitarian aid to combat the pandemic. Highlighting the need for humanitarian aid, Mexico demands to review all sanctions in place by the SC based on the criterion that no sanction such as travel limitations and embargoes should disrupt humanitarian aid. Therefore, Mexico firstly proposes the implementation of an expert group that conducts research on every regional SC sanction regime and the impact of specific travel limitations and economic embargoes on the delivery of humanitarian aid such as medicine and vaccines. Secondly, and in accordance with the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, Mexico demands that humanitarian exemptions are granted within a shorter time span, as saving lives in highly volatile pandemic and conflict situations can be a question of hours. Guaranteeing this, Mexico proposes creating the possibility of every SC Member State to schedule SC emergency sessions within 24 hours that deal with humanitarian exemptions for specific SC sanction regimes, ensuring a fast reaction to possible humanitarian reservations. Mexico is looking forward to collaboratively work together with all Member States in creating solutions to secure the safety of all people in face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Protection of Civilian in Armed Conflict

According to the Report of the Secretary-General for the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict (S/2021/423) just in Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria over 11,800 civilian casualties have been reported by the UN in 2020. Armed conflicts disproportionately affect the most vulnerable groups such as women and children, killing or leaving them prone to hunger, displacement, and sexual violence. The reality of war and the death of civilians alarmingly shows that the Protection of Civilians (POC), defined by IHL as persons who are not armed forces members, has to be comprehensively addressed by the SC.

The United Mexican States have ratified the Geneva Convention of 1949 and actively promote compliance to the corresponding regime of IHL. Mexico emphasizes the importance of a multilateral approach to the POC regardless of sex, race, religion, or political opinion as manifested in the Resolution 1265 (1999), constituting the basis for all following resolutions on the POC by the SC. Bearing the COVID-19 pandemic in mind, it is imperative to guarantee the unimpeded operation of health workers. As attacks on healthcare facilities and personnel violate IHL and human rights, Mexico emphasized the importance of SC Resolution 2286 (2016) and the promotion of the usage of the Surveillance System for Attack on Health Care (SSA) by the World Health Organization. In line with its feminist foreign policy, Mexico is a strong proponent of the 1974 Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict, acknowledging them as one of the most vulnerable groups in armed conflict. With the 2019 Spotlight Initiative and in close cooperation with the EU, Mexico's current efforts are following up on the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda established by Resolution 1325 (2000) aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and implementing gender perspectives in peacekeeping operations. Mexico is a signatory of the Kigali Principles, enhancing national and international accountability mechanisms for UN peacekeeping forces. As a core principle of the international community, the UN has the responsibility to protect in case the respective state is not able to protect its civilians in armed conflict and prevent war crimes against civilians. Consequently, in 2015 the French Republic and the United Mexican States proposed a code of conduct for the SC Permanent Members to obtain from their veto right voluntarily and collectively if any mass crimes, genocides, crimes against humanity or war crimes are observed and therefore demand strong and united action by the SC. Because UN PKOs present a key instrument to ensure the POC and obtain peace, Mexico has resumed its participation in UN PKOs in 2015 and currently deploys Mexican peacekeepers in five UN missions. Additionally, since 2020 Mexico trains international peacekeepers from different Member States in the Joint Training Centre for Peacekeeping Operations (CECOPAM) and provides courses in four different languages.

The United Mexican States seek to close the persisting data gap on understanding the reasons for the targeting of civilians in conflict. Therefore, analogously to the Resolution 2286 (2016) and the WHO database on attacks on medical personnel, Mexico proposes the implementation of an expert committee of organizations such as the WHO, UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, UN Women and UNICEF to collect and share data on women and children in armed conflict. Mexico calls upon all Member States to sign the Kigali Principles. Furthermore, Mexico proposes the mandatory deployment of independent legal and human rights experts with every PKO, to ensure IHL-guided behaviour by peacekeepers and the consequent reporting of any misconduct by these experts. Furthermore, every Member State that contributes troops to PKOs, should be encouraged to sign a declaration to hold its own personnel legally accountable for any occurrence of misconduct. Ensuring the success of PKOs, comprehensive female participation in planning and deployment is needed to better foster trust and understand the essential needs of the civilian population. Coherently with its feminist foreign policy, the SC Resolution 1325 (2000) WPS Agenda and SDG 5, Mexico proposes a mandatory female quota for PKO planning and deployment processes. Recognizing the importance of adequate equipment for PKOs and to successfully protect civilians, Mexico calls upon all Member States to increase the budget for PKOs, ensuring a wider participation of Member States as well as the comprehensive fulfilment of the peacekeeping mandate. Although strictly political solutions to conflicts and instability are always preferable, PKOs remain a central mode of action for the SC to prevent war crimes and protect civilians from IHL violations. Ensuring that the SC has the ability to act in case of emergency and in line with the 2030 Agenda, Mexico requests the SC Permanent Members to sustain from their veto rights at times when the inability to act means the foretold death of thousands, making the responsibility to protect imperative. Mexico invites all Member States to work collaboratively on the POC in armed conflict.