



**PERMANENT MISSION  
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**AGENDA ITEM 30 - REPORT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER**

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr. President,

Liechtenstein welcomes the fact that this debate takes place significantly earlier than in previous years, more in keeping with the importance of the topic. The debate of the annual report of the Security Council is a key opportunity to reflect on the relationship established by the UN Charter between two principal organs with carefully crafted mandates and clear provisions for cooperation. Crisis situations such as currently in Myanmar illustrate the need for a dynamic role of this Assembly in a manner that is supportive of and complementary to pronouncements of the Security Council when these are insufficient due to limitations imposed by Permanent Members. In a year like no other in the history of the United Nations, due to the deep impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, accountability of the Security Council vis-à-vis the UN membership on whose behalf it does its work is of particular importance.

We are discussing the annual report of the Security Council at a time when, under the able leadership of Estonia, the Council finally gets back to regular in-person meetings, something that this Assembly has achieved a full nine months ago. This is particularly concerning as it has come with a price, preventing the Council from implementing the full range of decision-making provisions in accordance with the Charter and leaving the better part of the Council's work of 2020 off the official records. The most important global decision-making body on matters of international peace and security must find a way to remain fully functional and accountable at all times and develop mechanisms to prevent a reoccurrence of the lack of transparency during the worst times of the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that

the importance of sound working methods can hardly be overstated and a thorough analysis by the Council on its work and functioning during COVID-19 should be an obvious and integral part of the Council's report to the General Assembly. As the report before us today lacks any in-depth discussion of that dimension of the Council's work, we strongly encourage its discussion in the next report of the Council. Today's debate should inform that discussion and a dedicated open debate of the Security Council could provide further useful input, including for the work of the Informal Working Group on Documentation & Other Procedural Questions, which has an obvious role in this respect. Liechtenstein appreciates the continued positive contribution of elected members of the Security Council on the update and implementation of note 507 and underlines the need to account for the views of the wider membership in this respect. While they have created positive momentum and initiated productive discussions on better working methods within the Security Council, progress in implementation has been slow, and agreements on such instrumental improvements as co-penholdership and fair burden sharing are still missing.

Mr. President,

We continue to see a concerning trend that the Security Council's annual report only represents an incomplete reflection of its performance. The format of the report as well as the nature of the drafting exercise does not lend itself to fully reflecting the Council's work, including where it has failed to act. The importance of the annual debate on the Council's report thus remains the first and foremost accountability tool to check the Council's performance.

The Council has largely not been able to show leadership on the pandemic itself. Only with considerable delay has it endorsed the Secretary-General's initiative for a global ceasefire, thereby limiting its early positive effects. In its discussions on the pandemic, it was hampered by an outdated and overly narrow and militarized approach to security. The pandemic has clearly demonstrated that human security must be at the heart of the Council's work if it wants to remain relevant in light of current security threats, prepared for future security crises and responsive to the expectations of the international community.

With respect to various crisis situations, the Council has fallen short of its tasks mandated by the Charter, with severe consequences for the people it is supposed to protect as well as for its own standing. The decisions to restrict the delivery of humanitarian aid across the Syrian border to the bare minimum stands

out as particularly irresponsible given the needs on the ground. The remaining cross-border channel for humanitarian aid is today a precarious life-line for millions of Syrians, who once again have become political bargaining chips at the whim of those willing to use their prerogatives solely to advance their national political interests. The General Assembly has a responsibility to step in if necessary to prevent another humanitarian catastrophe in Syria.

While the Secretary-General and other authoritative voices such as the ICRC report record numbers of IHL violations and failures to protect civilians, there is little in the Security Council's report on what it has done to address and reverse these trends. Most telling are the many instances where the Council disregards ongoing and serious violations of its own resolutions. One initiative that aims to improve the Council's record on the protection of civilians is the ACT Code of Conduct, now supported by 122 States, including two-thirds of the current Security Council membership, which together constitute a procedural majority. These States commit to timely and decisive Security Council action to prevent and end mass atrocity crimes.

Mr. President,

The Security Council's ability to take effective action continues to be undermined by the veto power. We have again seen three vetoes in 2020, a significant number in its own right. More difficult to quantify though is the number of proposals that were never put forward, or decisions modified to the point of ineffectiveness, due to the threat of a veto. The veto has a widespread paralyzing effect of anticipatory obedience.

Where the Council fails, we remain convinced that the General Assembly can do more to reaffirm its role, which is narrow by practice – not by law. Liechtenstein will continue to advocate for a formal General Assembly discussion of any use of the veto, without prejudice to any possible outcome and independently of the substance of the resolution that was subject to a veto. Liechtenstein will continue to help strengthen the voice of a majority of States who want the United Nations to succeed in bringing peace, comprehensive security, sustainable development and fundamental rights and freedoms to all peoples. The Charter provides ample ground and the Security Council report before us is ample reason for that.

I thank you.